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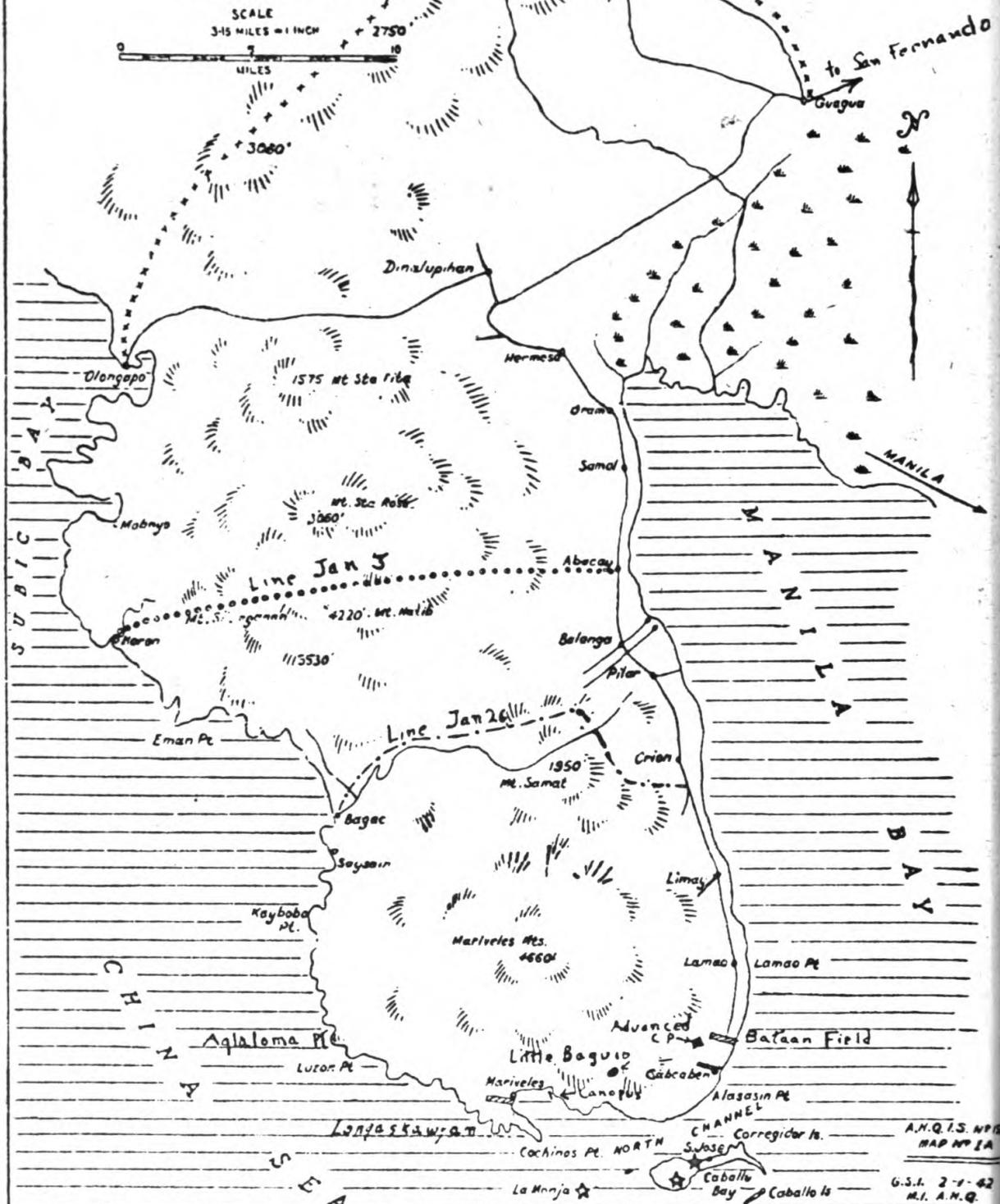




U.S. DEFENCE LINES IN  
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# BATAAN

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT

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The Saga of the Philippine Command  
of the United States Army Air Force,  
May 1941 to May 1942

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ALLISON IND

LIEUTENANT COLONEL, M.I.  
ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES

"He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;  
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat."

*—Battle Hymn of the Republic*

1944

NEW YORK

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

151

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**DEDICATED TO  
THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER  
AND TO MY WIFE**



Rec. Hist  
Carol Cox  
4-11-44  
49962

### *Acknowledgment*

The author of this book has been on active duty steadily since December 1940, and has been at the front continuously. Preparation of the book would have been impossible without the assistance, unstintingly accorded, of Colonel LeGrand A. Diller, Colonel F. H. Wilson, Dr. Joseph R. Hayden, Mr. E. D. Hester, and Edith Dora Johnson.

Editing, preparation of the manuscript for the press, and all arrangements for publication have been in the hands of Professor Lawrence H. Conrad.

The author expresses his warm gratitude.

A. I.



## Endpaper Maps

The left hand map is a reproduction of the original operations map that was used in the defense of Bataan Peninsula.

The right hand map shows the whole military area of the Southwest Pacific. Those who were ordered to leave the Philippines in March, 1942, escaped from Bataan and Corregidor by plane and by PT boat to the Island of Mindanao, and thence by Flying Fortresses to Melbourne, Australia.



# BATAAN: THE JUDGMENT SEAT



## *Far West to Far East . . .*

With almost a start I realized that there was a motion in the ship now—the long, slow roll of the Pacific. But the lights offshore, the lights of America, the lights of civilization still were there . . . to the north, to the east . . . and even to the south.

But to the southwest . . . No.

There the sea was black. A great dark fog blotted the horizon. Even the stars were gone. As I watched, slowly the prow of the ship turned and, as though irresistibly drawn into that quarter, made fast its course.

The first cold draft of the open sea blew my coat open. I drew it close about me and stared. But if there was something of significance to be read there, I could not discern it. Sea and sky met indefinitely beyond where there was light, and the night hid the answers to any unspoken questions.

This was April 22, 1941. The 23,000-ton United States Army transport ship *Washington* was setting forth upon her latest task of conveying men and materials to the Philippines. Far to the east, across a whole continent, I knew that General H. B. Claggett and Colonel H. H. George were receiving secret instructions in Washington. In a week's time or so they too would come to San Francisco and, boarding the "clipper," would span the vast Pacific in a fraction of the time we would take even in this fine, fast modern liner.

We would rendezvous in Manila, the three of us; one as commanding general of the Philippine Department Air Force, the other as executive officer, and I as intelligence officer. We had spoken little prior to our departure from Selfridge Field, Michigan, but the need for words really was not imperative.

Yes, we would rendezvous in Manila—we three.

Rendezvous . . . with what?

This, then, was the beginning.

Cobalt seas daintily trimmed the horizon with the vanishing white of old point lace. The Pacific. Calm, luxurious Pacific. In all this vast expanse, surely not one hint of the human foment that ringed us far beyond the sky line. How completely comfortable; thoughts of ease, relaxation, music—home.

Something catches there . . . home.

Why?

Of course there will be home, when we turn around and start the other way. Of course . . . But . . . Queer, always a little catch there some place, when you thought of home. Put it out of mind. Yes, that's better. Let's see; you've got a bit of time to put in on Spanish. Be needing that in the Islands. Be very useful for a couple of years. Before we go—home . . .

Nights. Soft as dreams. Dark forms hanging over the rails. Watching the great steel body of the ship glide through the liquid darkness below. Darkness converted into foam-flecked motion where our great floodlights illuminated the gigantic American flag painted on each side.

Ah, yes, we are not at war—yet. We can send our ships across the Pacific now, unafraid. But to ensure them against a mistaken image transmitted through the periscope tube of a roving submarine, we must make sure that we are brilliantly lighted. Even our yellow funnels are floodlit. Queer, that. Now we drive through the water—a mass of light, visible for twenty miles. For safety's sake.

What will the months bring?

A good portion of those aboard were going to Hawaii. For the most part their moments of seriousness were not prolonged. Hawaii . . . the playground of the Pacific. A grand adventure which for so many would never have come had it not been for this threat of danger in the Pacific. Good old war. Why, if it were not for that, they might be still driving across North Dakota's endless plains, pushing a pen in Chicago's Loop, assembling cars in Detroit or catching the 5:15 out of New York. The Jap was not such a bad guy. He had given them an opportunity to see Hawaii. But you birds going to the Philippines . . . Well, now . . . And

the conversation would turn abruptly, or at least an attempt would be made. But we "birds" going to the Philippines were not ready to relinquish it.

How many troops did we have there? Five thousand? Fifteen thousand? Twenty-five thousand? . . . Nobody seemed to know really. There's Brigadier General Parker. Let's ask him. The sun shines on his lean face as he gazes seaward. His smile is friendly. "Frankly, I don't know," he confesses, with a little chuckle. "I've been trying to get educated myself. I anticipated a change of station, and I have familiarized myself with every situation practically all over the world . . . except the Philippines." He chuckled again. "This is ironical, not to know at least the fundamentals about where I am going. And to assume an Infantry command, too!"

And what of the Asiatic Fleet? Any battleships? Oh, sure! Several of them. Uncle Sam would never leave a vulnerable spot like the Philippines protected by only light forces. Submarines, too. Others were not so sure. "Fleet's based on Hawaii," claimed one who had been there before. The Asiatic Fleet, he stated authoritatively, was "a couple of cruisers, a flock of overage destroyers, and a bunch of pigboats that did not dare submerge for fear of not being able to come to the surface again." So? Somewhere between must be the truth, we told ourselves.

And the Air Force? Was *that* an unknown quantity? To our minds came fresh mental pictures of smart little Severskys . . . P-35's and P-36's, their spinning propellers making zigzag streaks of light in the morning sun as they warmed up on the parking aprons. Sleek P-40's and sleeker P-39's, the Airacobras. To mind again came "statistics" on the Jap air arm. We lapped it up. Official stuff, it was. Antiquated old crates for the most part. The official reports did not say "crates," of course, but one gathered that there was nothing to worry about. Five-year-old stuff with rigid landing gears and mouse-power engines compared with our 1,000 h.p. Thunderers in the last of our pursuit deliveries.

And the Japanese pilot . . . Nearsighted. Couldn't draw a bead with his sights. Queer little guy, too. He was nervously constituted in such a way that he could not perform violent aerobatics. He'd

be cold meat once he ran up against real opposition in a modern airplane.

And so as the *Washington* thrust its way, day and night, toward the enigma of the southwest, we read our Intelligence Reports, chuckled, relaxed—thought of home. Home? There was that catch again.

### Hawaiian Impressions

Taupe mountains rising out of the sea. And losing themselves in cool mists that jealously refuse to reveal the complete splendor that is theirs as the first sun pipes their edges with color. Beacons winking a seaward assurance that this is a friendly land. And a city that clings to the lower hills. And uses them to boost itself into the heights still lost in the mists. Thin white lines that bloom momentarily and dissolve again. Waikiki. Desereted now. But carrying on, nevertheless. And beyond, Diamond Head. Mecca of the first crossers, and sentimental Gibraltar to the old stories.

The ship pauses silently, then swims a few strokes closer. The wharves seem to glide out to us. A grove of brilliant green trees, exactly spaced. A stage setting? No, it's just part of this unbelievable land. But it doesn't look real, anyway. And the rising sun adds to the illusion of a planned setting. It's all so gently dramatic. Then a band, hidden some place beyond our line of vision. And never has there been such a plaintive caress to the music of the welcoming theme. The gangplank slides into lock; bounces gently to the regular toe thuds of troops in endless line from ship to wharf. Then customs for those whose baggage is more pretentious than a barracks bag. But it's all very good-natured and not a trace of the high-handed irritability and smile-smashing belligerency that characterizes a similar occasion in New York. Besides, who could be a lout while surveying a dainty lovely creature, rendered the more bewitching in the depths of tiers of flowers. Hawaiian leis. Perfumed gorgeousness.

Most modern and very swift trackless trolleys. But their indicators bear no such familiar designations as, for instance, State

Street or Tenth Avenue. Instead, it is Waikiki. And always well loaded on outbound trips. Gobs of gobs wherever one looks. The Navy is strongly established here. And well that it is, too.

Pearl Harbor just a few miles outside the city. Rows of sturdy battle wagons in somber gray. Anchored according to class. The big mammas and papas first. Heavy and sedate. And with voices that speak loud. Then the trim junior partners, as it were. Ten-thousand-ton cruisers, really. There are whispers that they have excess vibration and are anything but steady gun platforms in weather—but pretty to look at, anyway. Then rows and rows of youngsters in the nursery. Destroyers. The Navy is spread out over the island—not all eggs are in one basket any more—even established back of Diamond Head. Good.

But from Waikiki, Diamond Head is still just Diamond Head of romantic lore. The incredible blue of the water, shading to cobalt further out beyond the coral reefs. The atmosphere: clear and uncontaminated. An inbound freighter near the horizon is edged so sharply that she seems to be standing on her tiptoes. The booming swimmers. Surfboard riders whipping toward shore like water-borne arrows. It's very beautiful, but disappointing to some who find that each comber brings with it a new sifting of sharp coral fragments that are uncomfortable underfoot.

The ever busy resort establishments. Tended mostly by native girls or Japanese. The personification of the word "feminine," these people. Soft-voiced, dainty, immaculate and with charming smiles bespeaking gentle friendly natures. Refreshing femininity. And so rare these days.

Wheeler Field. Gleaming white officers' quarters in modified Spanish-style architecture. Done in stucco. Hardwood floors. Venetian shades. And most everything else that can be found in better-class homes everywhere. Including solariums. Life in the Army isn't so hard. But my mind goes back to some of the posts I've served. Well, maybe it isn't so hard.

The Officers' Club with its colorful patio. And the welcoming dance that evening. Pretty ceremony, that. The commanding officer and his lady call out the names of the newcomers, who present themselves to an ovation from the very interested "Home guards."

Each recently arrived gentleman receives a lei from the commander's wife—but that's all. Each recently arrived lady receives from the commander, a lei—and a kiss on the cheek! Now is it my poor position, or do I just imagine that while the commander's aim is correct as to elevation, his deviation is somewhat off, so that he registers perilously close to an actual hit? Well, it's a comfortably near miss, anyway. Now a pretty little speech of welcome is made. And the party resumes. No further introductions are considered necessary.

The squadron is out at the crack of dawn, roaring over the towering ranges. The training has been stepped up. But there is no feeling here of danger. Some say goodbye to us in a manner that bespeaks their opinion of our future. They call us the Philippine Suicide Squad.

Excitement for the Army at the Navy stronghold. A carrier has just come in with a full load of new P-40 types. They fly them right off the deck to the waiting hangars here at Wheeler. The first P-40's they've had. *Hum-m-m!* Wonder what the Philippines really have, if Hawaii is just getting her first 40's?

We'll leave during the night. Still loading at late afternoon.

What a hullabaloo! The hordes of little native youngsters who have been swimming about the ship most of the day have gathered near the stern, and the troops are throwing coins to them. It's incredible, the fish they are; and the length of time they remain under water trying to retrieve an elusive coin. These people are superior in many respects to those who have come to rule them. Their fine bodies, regular features, and soft manners exceed our own capacities. They have a different, less artificial sense of values. Their souls are filled with music and appreciation for gentle ways.

It is 3:40 A.M. before that same hoarse bellow that awakened me as we backed out into San Francisco Bay, again bawls us out beyond the breakwater of Honolulu Harbor.

This is Wednesday May 7. It now is 1:15 in the afternoon. We are making another of those sharp turns to starboard incidental to our navigating the Strait of San Bernardino. For the past several hours beautiful, rugged and, oh, so green islands have slid by on

both sides of us. To us who have been so long on the ocean, even a taxicab would look good. Somehow I am sure that the appearance of these islands has not changed much since the days when General (then Lieutenant) Claggett first saw them and knew that those to the south were filled with savage Moros. One well could imagine that they were now, and that those smoke columns rising ever and again from the mysterious hearts of green-covered hills were signals, alarming the tribes deeper back that the white man's boat had been sighted and that the war drums must beat. At noon we were 313 miles from Manila, more than 4,700 from Honolulu, and, alas, more than 8,700 miles from home. It has been stifling all morning.

## *The Philippine Station*

The steamy heat of Manila Harbor. Even in the gray of dawn, with the mists hanging over the city and far beyond, the pale outlines of mountains. Later, the sun climbing its own fiery ladder. The little quarantine boat, with dirty awning, circling around us like some impudent water beetle. Just a bit frightened of this modern giant which had appeared overnight. The *Washington* had been there before, though. In November. She had done a real job of evacuating Navy family personnel from Shanghai and had then swept on to Manila. The Navy was taking no chances even as long ago as that. She was the biggest craft to go in from the breakwater. They had to clear a way for her as she shouldered up to Pier 7.

### Pier 7 . . .

I was to see it months later under vastly different conditions than upon this morning when both the pier level and the long covered pier house were filled with hundreds and hundreds of colorful figures waving other colorful bits. And under the boiling Manila sun the military band from Fort McKinley welcomed us in. A gala occasion, truly, that morning of May 8th.

The 8th of the month. There was another 8th to fix itself in a

burning figure upon my mind . . . December 8th. And a few weeks later, the same Pier 7 again. But what a difference!

The Army and Navy Club. A reception for the incoming lads who had drunk some fifteen thousand bottles of soft drink aboard our "prohibition" liner and who now proposed to break their fast in royal fashion. The ingredients were not wanting, and Army and Navy Club hospitality was famous the world around.

In a ballroom where a Filipino orchestra gave rhythm to our unsteady sea feet, a reception line stood its ground against all comers. My pace quickened at the sight of a familiar figure. Portly and military, it was. General H. B. Claggett, who was Washington's answer to the appeal of General George Grunert, Commanding General, Philippine Department, for the "fightingest Air Corps General" that the War Department could send.

He looked a commander, General Claggett. Straight and tall, grizzled gray where not bald. Gray eyes, creased face. Even the paunch which the years and indulgent living had given him only increased his military stance. He almost dwarfed the small dark-faced man standing beside him.

Nothing really could dwarf the quick smile, the deep-set penetrating black eyes and the radiation of downright character emanating from that little man. Colonel Harold H. George, known as "Pursuit George" to differentiate him from the other Harold George in the Air Corps, who was "Bomber George." "He's good too!" Pursuit George would exclaim with that twinkle in his eyes I was to know so well.

When we could, Colonel George and I drew off.

"We have our instructions," said the Colonel guardedly. "You must reveal them to no one, but you must also know." I nodded. "The General and I have been here only four days, but we are leaving very shortly."

My eyes widened. He made sure we were not being overheard. But there was no danger. By this time convivialities had become well established and there was a cluster of admiring young pilots around the sociable General, the first Air Corps General to be assigned to the Philippine Station.

"We have been ordered to China," exclaimed Colonel George

quietly. "It is very important. Our instructions came from the Secretary of State . . . Look." He fished from his pocket a diplomatic passport. "You won't see them signed this way very often." His finger pointed to the rigid strokes which traced the signature of Cordell Hull.

"That looks important," I ventured.

He nodded. "It is. We go directly to Chungking to confer with Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, and from there we will survey every strategic air point, down from Chekiang Province around through to Burma."

"Burma!"

"We may need airfields there one day," he went on. "In the meantime, you must stay here."

My heart sank. Dimly I heard his words.

"There is little here in the way of staff organization. It is up to you to establish our Intelligence Section and a lot of other things which may not be in your line. Learn all you can: do all you can. There is so little time, and so very much to do in what there is."

I stared at him. But he grinned widely.

"Oh, no, I don't mean tomorrow, or the next day maybe, but don't fool yourself for one moment." His voice was cold with grim meaning. "It's *coming!* And I just pray to Heaven that it does not come within the next few weeks."

I wetted my lips. "Well," I said, with attempted lightness, "I suppose that's comforting." But it was a lightness I did not feel. Somehow when this little man fixed you with his dark, honest eyes and made a statement like that, you had a conviction that you were listening, not simply to a statement, but to the essence of prophecy.

A few days after the reception at the Army and Navy Club and the solemn pronouncement by Colonel George, the three of us were gathered in General Claggett's room at the club.

Our first shipment of airplane reinforcements had arrived. Reinforcements for the pathetic little "force" with which we proposed to stay the armed air might of Japan. It was the force whose adequacy I had elsewhere begun to doubt when, two days prior to our arrival in Manila, the *Washington* had been "buzzed" by aircraft

from Luzon. At that time, I looked with some dismay. The bombers that roared around us seemed impressive enough to the uninitiated, but to the Air Corps lads aboard there was something amiss. These were not B-17's, "Flying Fortresses"—or even the relatively antiquated two-engined B-18's. They were ancient obsolete B-10's. And the fighter pursuit escort . . . No Airacobras . . . No P-40's . . . No P-36's. At least, there were P-35's. They had some veteran P-26's, too, we learned.

The steamy afternoon was drawing to a close. Colonel George was going to play tennis on the club court between us and Manila Bay. But he didn't. There was something far more important to decide, and the tone of it made my spine tingle in spite of the heat.

"What we've got to decide, Hal," rumbled the General, "is whether we will assemble the bombers of this shipment first, or the fighters. Because if Japan declares war"—he paused, and again that tingle down my spine—"before we return from China, we want to have the proper kind of airplane in the hands of those who will have to use them. Will they need fighters more urgently or bombers?"

The discussion went on, and there I was to see the first unvarying demonstration of Colonel George's basic concept: aggressive defense.

"The bombers!" he insisted. "They will want bombers to go out to smack them before they ever get close to Luzon. They will want bombers to go out to the north of Luzon and then to slip up to Formosa . . . Hit them before they can get close enough to hit us. With what little we have, if we let them get here . . ." He waved his hand deprecatingly. "Keep them away. Fight them away. I say—bombers."

In the critical months that followed I was to see the magnificent, never ceasing fight he waged to transmute into golden reality the basic metal of his defense concepts. I was to know that in his heart he realized we were utterly inadequate and that it was but a fanciful dream to assume that we could whip the Japanese in this area if his attack was determined. But what we could do was to hit him hard and possibly deal him such a blow that reasonably prompt strong reinforcements would enable us to stand up to him on a toe-

to-toe, slug-trading basis. As the sun began to drop over distant Corregidor and the serrated backbone of Bataan Peninsula, the agreement was reached.

"Yes, I think you are right," said the General, in his deep, resonant, barrel voice. "Bombers first, then fighters. I will feel better for having decided that way if they try coming at us before we return from China."

Fort Santiago. Relic of a bygone century. Potbellied and moss-green. Its once stern walls somehow now ineffective. Friendly rather than grim. Comfortable in the tropical heat. An air of old-age retirement hung about this one-time Spanish stronghold. A spirit of gentle protecting ease. Stout sloping walls leaned inward, not for strength or to present a glancing surface to hostile shot; rather, they leaned restfully against each other. This was the Headquarters of the Philippine Department, United States Army.

There was nothing hurried there. You newcomers from America—you'd soon learn to take it easy. You'd have to. Otherwise you'd burn yourself up. "The tropics are different, you know."

And truthfully spoken too. Arriving as we did in the hottest, or near-hottest, period of the year, we soon were to know the de-vitalizing effect of the Philippine heat. I know of no more uncomfortable heat in the Far East than that of Manila.

Perhaps it was that, or was it simply the spirit of old Fort Santiago . . . Whatever accounted for it, the effect struck me with impact—that Headquarters of the Philippine Department, United States Army, the pivot round which this vast drum of war would spin, and which even then was gathering momentum, was soft. Utterly soft! Call it what you will, the tropics, Manila heat, American indifference, or—well, what you will. There was flaccidity, a torpidity, and an all-pervading lack of movement or resolution, not in one department, not in just a few individuals, but fearfully widespread.

There were some reasons for this, easy of analysis. The Philippine Station long had been looked upon by the War Department and officers of long rank and short distances to retirement, as an ideal place to polish off a career in the Army. Or, again, it was a

good tropic Siberia for the relegation of those whose overambitions worried their superiors and thereby indicated the need for a little isolation treatment. On the Philippine Station you could take it easy, and take it rightfully so. You came to work in the morning about eight o'clock, and if there was mail you opened it. Not rapidly and all at once, but with heavy thoughts on the contents, you gave it your official attention. By that time, a little black-eyed Tagalog in blue denim and canvas shoes would blow you out of the office with his Flit gun. When that cloud of mosquito-annoying mixture had settled down to below-the-desk altitude, there was time for a telephone call or two—provided the combined ingenuity and patience of those concerned could overcome the bundle of antiquity otherwise described as the Fort Santiago switchboard. Then it was "coke" time, and that could consume anything up to half an hour of genial participation in cooling refreshment and neighborly conversation. Finally came the hard work of the day. Maybe some dictation to add a spark of inspiration to the latest "buck sheets" that came your way for the benefit of your particular genius. If there were no buck sheets in your "In" basket, perhaps you initiated one and started it on its pompous round of officialdom. Sometimes it would gather as many as a dozen official signatures, each with its gem of wisdom, before it came back to you for "final action" or "for your information," etc., etc., and likely as not your final action concerning this official brain child of yours, which had demanded the well paid time and attention of upwards of a dozen ranking officers, was to chuck it languidly into your waste basket.

Maybe there was a conference or two, but if not, then it would soon be one o'clock, anyway.

You didn't go back. Indeed not. You slept. If you did not sleep, it was because you were foolish. Everyone slept who knew how to live in the tropics. It was siesta time, and you stayed indoors until at least four o'clock because the heat was great. Now this was very true. The heat *was* great; and Filipino, and Spaniard and mestizo alike, all knew the way to live in the tropics. In vain we discussed it with some of our white brothers who had been there months or even years before our arrival. Certainly, the logic of

their argument from the physiological standpoint was undeniable. But the Filipino, the Spaniard, or the mestizo was not supposed to be preparing for a fight to save his life. But we all had come over from the States and had no illusions on the score. (Jokingly, one of the Air Corps officers leaving the *Washington* at Honolulu had referred to us departing for the Islands as the "suicide squad." It was ironic that when Japanese carrier-borne planes roared down over Wheeler Field those all-too-few months later, this officer was one of the first to be listed a casualty.)

Still, arguments fell upon deaf ears. It was easy to think that way. For living in a continuous Turkish bath saps the will and strength of any man alive.

There were those, nevertheless, who were fully alive to the vast job before us, and surely one was the occupant of the long gray house, Quarters No. 1, Military Plaza—General George Grunert. To him, it must be said at the outset, goes much of the credit for the desperate resistance of the men on the rugged flanks of Bataan—made possible by his vision and determination in fighting this deadly prewar pall of apathy and inertia. There was a war plan, and between its yellow covers much sound military and human logic had been incorporated. But General Grunert never was satisfied with it. Repeatedly he called for revisions to bring it up to date, to fill the obvious gaps and to detect those not so obvious. But the exceptions of the Grunert variety were few indeed and, flatly speaking, the general atmosphere was one of sluggish officialdom.

### Parañaque Sinkhole

Nichols Field in May 1941. Or, Nichols Field in most any year, less graciously but more accurately referred to by expressive Air Force personnel as "Parañaque Sinkhole."

Roughly six miles from the Philippine Department Headquarters at Fort Santiago, the field stood back from Manila Bay several hundred yards, and in this strip the barrio of Baclaran stretched its slatternly single main thoroughfare, flanked by flimsy houses

and open-fronted shops of typical native construction—which is to say, thin frame and bamboo, or clapboard and elephant iron roofs. Beyond to the south was the barrio of Parañaque.

The drive from Fort Santiago offered welcome relief from the already oppressive heat as we struck off southward along famous Dewey Boulevard, the car bearing the single silver star on a red plate. The plate was uncovered, for General Claggett and Colonel George occupied the rear seat.

To the right, the graceful, powerful-appearing hull of a modern cruiser lay, still slightly hazed by the Manila Bay mists. At intervals small flush-deck-type destroyers of the Asiatic Fleet sat motionless. Far beyond to the south where Cavite's hook lay outlined, a squat almost shapeless form, tiny in the distance, could be discerned. Above this the three silver towers of Cavite Radio Station marked the farthest points of land at the Naval Station. The modern cruiser would be the *Houston*. The destroyers—they had numbers, and numbers they remained to most of us until that final day when “Alert” orders melted them into the far lands of never-never. The spatulate object beneath Cavite's landmark towers would be our only claim to an entry in *Jane's Fighting Ships*, in the Aircraft Carrier and Tender class. A few hundred miles to the north Japan possessed an unknown number of modern, powerful carriers. We did not know how many then, nor were we at any time during our tenancy of the Philippine Islands ever sure. But the *Langley* did not even rate the classification of “carrier.” She was merely a “tender.”

Past the tall white structure of the Admiralty apartments, past old Fort San Antonio Abad, opposite the Yacht Club, past the cool thatched-roof structure of Manila Polo Club, and on out the Boulevard to the end of the waterfront highway, we drove. Then, turning abruptly to the left, we entered a narrow, one-track street. This was the connecting link from Dewey Boulevard to Baclaran's arterial road, from which the equally narrow bypass to Nichols Field crossed over the stinking Parañaque River and landed on the marshes which ringed the entire river side of Nichols Field. Colonel George's lithe little body was twisting in all directions at once.

"Is this the only way in?" he exclaimed sharply.

The driver nodded.

"Yes, sir, they are planning to surface this road and widen it."

"Planning to!" snapped the Colonel. "That is a plan which should have been taken care of years ago. Why, this is hardly wide enough to admit the trucks carrying knocked-down airplanes that are now sitting there in the bay, waiting for transport."

It was quite right. Before these sorely needed airplanes, which had just arrived from America, could be transported to the field for assembly it actually was necessary to widen the road, remove fence lines and chop down trees. Such was the approach to Nichols Field. And despite every effort on the part of Colonel George, and even higher-ranking figures, the wide, improved road considered absolutely necessary to the proper servicing and defense of Nichols Field never was finished because of bickerings. Every pound of the cargo was forced to traverse first this stretch of Baclaran bottleneck and then the narrow approach to the wooden bridge over the river, before it could find fairly safe, fast going again on the other side. Months later, a single Japanese bomb reduced this total traverse to a bare ten feet when it flung half the wooden bridge into the swamp water of the Parañaque. There were only the usual delays this morning, and a perspiring sentry, startled at the unusual general's star staring out of the front of the car coming over the bridge, snapped to attention and we passed on.

Turning right, we went up the narrow partially surfaced road back of the hangar line and came upon the line itself. Before us some twenty trim silver P-35's sat at attention. Sleek, clean little ships, these Severskys were the best in the Islands. Even better than our own P-35's at home. Strange that, but not if you knew the truth about our airplanes exported for war purposes to other nations. The same P-35, which in the United States had been "roped, drawn, and hog-tied" by official specification demands, rose to varying levels of brilliant efficiency under the more discerning eyes of foreign military experts. Certain non-airminded Army authorities of the old school insisted that the plane was simply an extension of the infantry man's rifle. It was, they declared, merely a weapon, made portable and mobile, to be fired

from the flier's shoulder, and nothing more. Accordingly, they insisted that its machine-guns (two only!) be mounted directly in front of the pilot for firing through the blades of the air screw. Thus, the pilot literally put his airplane to his shoulder and fired his guns. Despite the annoying insistence of those who dared to disagree and showed a more progressive imagination, an additional gun in each wing was not allowed. Then too, the idea of pursuit airplanes carrying bombs was one of those "ridiculous hallucinations" indulged in by the irresponsible fellows who made up the Air Force.

They were not to be humored, even if they did kick up such a devil of a fuss. So the U.S. Seversky was not allowed to carry a single small bomb.

World War II was to find a consignment of P-35's—altered for export (which is another way of saying that they were altered for proper increased efficiency) en route to Sweden. Orders sizzled out from Washington, and the shipment was diverted. Thus, quite by accident as it were, did the Philippines receive its first consignment of anything remotely approaching modern aircraft within a year of Pearl Harbor. Those gleaming crafts, sitting out in the Luzon sun and radiating heat from their metal sides, were a part of this shipment, brought over by the 17th Pursuit Squadron. Sweden struck a high line in its demand for greater efficiency of the P-35. These airplanes carried an extra .50 caliber machine gun in each wing, were capable of handling ten hundred-pound bombs, and had a baggage compartment immediately back of the pilot. It was to this compartment that a number of the pitifully few to escape from Bataan were to owe their lives.

Beyond the P-35's, a pair of old P-26's were warming up with their characteristic exhaust tempo of an outboard motor. Unbelievably, they had formed the backbone of our "Air Force" until the 35's "accidentally" arrived. Yet, woefully inadequate as they were, they were to exact a final toll from the Japanese before burying their venerable bones in the fastness of Luzon.

Further down the hangar line some huge boxes were spewing forth silver contents. These were the beginning of the reinforced bomber squadron that had arrived by ship from Hawaii. Looming

large beside the spindlelike bodies of the P-35's, was a fuselage pierced with windows.

"Mine," grunted General Claggett, wrangling his inevitable cigar. "It will be a pleasure to ride in a royal yacht instead of a B-18, won't it?"

"You can have it, sir," grinned Colonel George. "For me, I'll strap on one of those little fellows and go riding with it." His black eyes danced at the thought.

Half an hour later the B-18 rose into the hot sky and turned heavily into the north for Clark Field, General Claggett at the copilot's controls. A moment later, a little observation plane whipped up and bore into his wake. It was Colonel George. They were going upon their first inspection of Clark Field, about seventy miles north-northwest in the province of Pampanga.

The heat was washing in on the field in great exhausting blasts. Bronzed mechanics in shorts sought the slight shadow of extended wings while servicing the sizzling aircraft on the line. Before them the huge corrugated iron hangars offered momentary relief. But it was better to stay out all the time than to alternate. You felt it less.

The atmosphere rippled over the black-topped surface of the runway. Still, lest visions of a broad expanse of runway with billiard-table-top smoothness come to mind, let it be pointed out that this black-top was narrow and sometimes showed the general characteristics of a washboard. There was unbelievably little here to indicate that thousands upon thousands upon thousands of dollars had been spent on Nichols Field. My eye traversed the length and made a quick estimate. P-40 type airplanes with their high take-off and landing speeds would have a sweet time on that strip! It would be even-ante whether they gained their hundred-plus-mile rate and lifted their wheels before they whipped over the far end and found themselves in the rough. And that was to say nothing of trying to set them down in an equal distance. Yet this was one of the two principal military airfields in the Philippine Islands and certainly a field we should be required to depend upon in the event of hostilities. I blinked and swallowed.

Taking occasional cover from the sun, I walked about. The

idea was to fix in mind the airdrome defense arrangements. It was an idea. That's all. Whether anyone else had had such an idea was any man's guess. Likely they had. But there was no evidence of it. Not one bit. Surely we were within countable months, possibly weeks, of war with a power seasoned by years of conflict, yet here was not one vestige of antiaircraft protection for our second most important and, in some respects, our most important airfield in the Islands. For that matter, there was not even a machine gun. Pill-boxes which might enable a ground crew to fire against paratroops were nowhere in evidence. Oh, yes, there were machine guns. Most of them 1918 survivals. But they were packed away for the most part where the ravages of the moist tropical heat would not threaten their mechanisms.

In the relatively cool depths of one of the hangars Major W. N. ("Pinkie") Amis was supervising the preliminary erection of P-40 type pursuits which had just come by ship.

"When we get lined up here, we can erect two or three a week," he explained, applying his handkerchief to his steaming brow. "We've got some good boys, and there's Brodine, from the factory of the company that makes them. He's good." (And I was to find him so during the horrible, critical days that came upon us so suddenly.)

"That's excellent," I said, with relief. For it seemed to me that, verily, we were naked in a world of hostile soldiers in armor. "I will be glad to see those P-40's snorting over Manila."

Pinkie looked at me, and his eyes blinked. "You won't see 'em for a while, anyway."

"I won't?" I said, puzzled.

He shook his head. "No. We can erect 'em, but we can't run 'em."

With that he spoke with unprintable feeling, and as he spoke, my feelings likewise reached a quick boiling point. Extracting the English from the more colorful elements of Pinkie's explanation I learned that all the coolant for the P-40's had been sent to Panama, on the other side of the world. To run those engines up, even for a few seconds, without that coolant would have ruined them be-

yond repair. Until it arrived, we would erect a couple of dozen of the only fighter craft that could possibly meet the Japanese on anything like equal terms. When we had erected them we could set them down on the line to remain perfect, helpless targets until Fate and the powers delivered unto us the all-precious coolant liquid for the motors.

### To Begin with . . .

. . . There probably wasn't a square yard of Luzon territory, to say nothing of the other large islands—Mindoro, Panay, Cebu, Negros, Mindanao—of which the Jap did not possess complete files and minutest detail. Maps, photographs, commercial and engineering statistics, civil and military lists, weak points, strong points, points of easy approach and those to be avoided—he had them all. We knew it. Twenty-five thousand nationals in Mindanao alone offered a perfect haven for the ever active Japanese agent. Scattered throughout all of Luzon were others, little men who were suddenly to assume great importance after December 8th. Or perhaps it should be said that they were *openly* to assume great importance. They had been important before that to the Nipponese Government, but we, in our blithe, ostrichlike way, ignored them. That is, except for such sharp-minded individuals as Colonel O'Rear, G-2 under General Grunert, and his active flock of ferrets, headed by experience-wise Captain Raymond and assisted energetically by, among others, Lieutenant Ralph Keeler, a trained mining engineer.

We had nothing—or practically nothing. True, when there was enough of an appropriation to run photographic missions we had done so, with the result that we possessed some obliques and verticals of nearly all the eighty-one airfields listed in the Philippines Bureau of Aeronautics guide. And we had a fair file covering some districts considered of military importance, such as Corregidor, which sat like a giant tadpole facing the China Sea, thirty miles across Manila Bay and flanked on the left by Cavite and

Ternate and on the right by a land whose rugged peninsula shape was to burn itself into the minds of thousands of Americans, yes, even millions, before many months were gone—Bataan.

Bataan was there in the files, too, and half curiously I examined some of the photographs. They showed almost everywhere a dense dapple. So dense was this feature across most of the photographs that they were rendered meaningless, except to the trained photographic interpreter. Trees, of course—thousands upon thousands of them. How well I was to know them, and how unutterably thankful I was to be that they were packed so close!

"But what about objective folders?"

Back upstairs I went to the Air Officer.

Colonel Richards chuckled in his genial way. "You had better go back there to your battered desk—which, I understand, has a nail to keep the top drawer shut, and thus gives you a combined desk and safe." He chuckled again. "You had better go back to that desk, sharpen a dozen pencils, and get going, because the answer is: 'We ain't got any.'"

He was right. The start of our accumulation of data, without which we could not possibly have carried on a bombing attack against Formosa, or any other enemy territory with the hope of finding a target, began that day when, taking Colonel Richards' advice, I sharpened a dozen pencils and with one of them wrote upon a sheet of virgin white paper, "Objective Folder No. 1."

It was a beginning, at least. But still a thousand other details demanding attention, and the subsequent inspection trips upon which I was to accompany General Claggett throughout Malaya and Dutch stations and, later, Australia, would have ensured the failure of this tremendously important project had it not been for the fate which brought me Private James Roulston in a batch of enlisted men assigned for duty at the old Headquarters, and Captain Charles Tyler, sent down from Clark Field to do work of this kind.

Scattered throughout the Islands, not only Luzon, but all of the large islands to the south—Mindoro, Panay, Cebu, etc.—were hundreds of Filipino watchers. They were not well trained; there had not been time for that. In fact, about all that could be done was to

endeavor to impress upon their willing enough minds the necessity for prompt reporting of any airplane during an exercise, in the hope that a real emergency would find them ready, attentive and alert to their responsibilities. There was no opportunity to teach them the fine points of aircraft identification.

Though the reports that came in were halting and unreliable; and though we were poorly prepared to coordinate them into a system; we did possess one breath-taking piece of equipment that was supposed to be the heart and center of our intelligence program. Our map of the Philippine Islands was our one and only show piece.

The big electrically lighted map was impressive. Its twinkling lights somehow bespoke a mysterious power in a broad land, a power that moved along invisible air lines to the trunks within this mechanical center. It made good reading, as it were. It possessed, unfortunately, a greater degree of dramatic than of actual value. This we were to learn in subsequent tests. Still, it was a start. It had been a tremendous task to organize these many watchers and to organize the country's very limited communication facilities—to adopt a method of relaying telephone messages and to impress all with the need for careful, slow, distinct enunciation, so that interpreters at Fort Santiago could easily understand the faint messages coming over the lines and relay them properly to the Air Warning staff at Headquarters.

But the need for efficiency, for modernization, for improvement of all kinds, long had been indicated within the very heart of the Philippine Department itself . . . that main switchboard. The eve of war caught us with an affair as uncertain in years as it was of present performance. Demands for replacement of all kinds of obsolete equipment had swamped supply agencies, and thus the period of expansion and overload put overwhelming burdens on the inadequate equipment.

A few months before the outbreak of war there was a test of this Air Warning Service. Real airplanes—medium bombers—had been sent north far above Clark Field. Watchers had been alerted as for a given hour. Soon after the starting time a call came in. Many minutes elapsed and then another call. Nearly ten minutes

and then another. With the speed of the modern bomber, it was obvious that our people were having difficulty with the communication system. Forty-six minutes elapsed between the time of the intended alert and the actual taking off of planes into the air.

The modern Japanese bomber, as we were to learn to our sorrow, was no "antiquated crate," but an extremely swift, capable machine which could sustain itself over long periods in excess of two hundred and twenty-five miles an hour. It required no mathematical genius to calculate the speed with which the Japanese would have descended upon Clark Field before our alert gave our men an opportunity to put their machines at fighting altitude. Months later, even after communication had been greatly developed, we were to experience the bitter helplessness of being unable to provide warnings which our faithful Philippine watchers had gotten to us by one means or another.

### Singapore Savant

General Claggett and Colonel George were still absent in China. They would be back shortly. So it was that Colonel Richards became host to our Singapore visitor, Group Captain Charles Darvel. And a plane put at his disposal made it possible for him to accomplish a quick tour of Luzon, with particular reference to the airfields.

The evening of a boiling night early in June found Darvel in the middle of the group of officers called by Colonel Richards to hear his comments. Over his shoulder I could dimly see the river boats through the open windows of old Fort Santiago. At the moment, the interisland boat *Panay* was moving silently up the Pasig to her berth. She was one of the largest of the interisland fleet and was to play a rôle in the sinister months to come.

"You will understand, I am sure," Captain Darvel began, "if I say that it is my belief that a sudden determined enemy attack would reduce the effectiveness of your present air force practically to zero."

That sensation I had experienced before and was to experience

so many times later—a little hot, lightninglike tingle along my spine—punctuated his sentences. I am sure there were several in that group who had no illusions, but these words seemed to snap home like machine-gun bullets. Sitting almost in front of me was Major K. J. K. Gregg, then leader of the 17th Pursuit Squadron. His brown eyes narrowed. He was thinking intently, and the long bony finger that tapped the ash off his cigarette was as steady as a piece of wood. I was to see that man so many times while Japanese bombs smashed around us and, then as now, that steady finger. But he never betrayed any feeling, any evidence of what might have been disturbing the inner man. Blond-haired Major R. A. Grussendorf, Group Operations Officer at Nichols Field, stared hard at the smooth shiny concrete floor, reflecting pools of light from the dangling electrics. Colonel Churchill watched the spiral smoke from his cigarette, his face immobile. Another whose name was to be indelibly written in the history of Bataan was in that circle. He was Major O. L. Grover, Squadron Leader of the 20th Pursuit, Nichols Field. His quick brain took in those words, weighed them, classified them, and did not find them wanting. Grover's restless eyes saw far more than the objects immediately before them. He knew that Group Captain Darvel spoke the truth, and his application of the principles of dispersal was largely responsible for the preservation of the pursuit units which survived the first shattering blows at Clark Field on December 8.

"You must have more airfields. As I see it at this time, you have only two fields upon which you are certain of being able to operate Army bombers and service them. Likewise, there are only two capable of handling fast modern fighters, and one of these is Nichols . . ." His voice trailed off, then again that quick smile. "Well, one can't be tactful and truthful at the same moment in this regard—Nichols is dubious, to say the least. You must have alternate airfields to which harassed airplanes can run for servicing and get out into the air again. You must have dispersal of your repair facilities—one serious raid may cripple your entire supply, because, as I see it, practically everything is centered in the Philippine Air Depot, in buildings which present perfect targets from the air, and which would become flaming ruins in no time at all."

He stopped. It was obvious he did not wish to offend. It was quite obvious he was appalled by our vulnerability.

We shifted. The heat was truly suffocating. We knew he spoke the truth, and certainly no part of his statement was truer than the last. Right now, most of us were more concerned about terminating the interview and escaping the suffocating air of Fort Santiago than anything else that could be mentioned. After all, we were trying, and just how we were going to accomplish the appearance of alternate airfields, of dispersal hangars, of underground fuel and bomb dumps, of pens to protect aircraft against blast—and all overnight, as it were, well . . .

Reading our thoughts, Group Captain Darvel said: "Yes, I know it is most difficult. In Malaya, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham says, 'We will do the difficult things first—the impossible may take rather longer.'"

Laughing blue-gray eyes that meant friendship—if he liked you; a square-set jaw, clamping firm white teeth—that meant trouble if he didn't like you. Splendidly set up. Broad of shoulder, narrow of hip, springy of step, he walked with an eager forward thrust of his head—Charles A. Sprague, Captain, U.S. Army Air Corps.

The first day I saw him, he gave me a shock, for he had practically captured the Intelligence Section of the Philippine Army Air Force intact.

In other words, he had usurped my battered desk, and to all intents and purposes he appeared to be a firm convert to the idea that possession was nine-tenths, at least.

"Assigned here?" I hazarded.

He nodded. "Yes, I am here with General Claggett." He laid a sheet of orders before me.

"I am to be G-3—Operations, you know," he said. Then he grinned and I saw the friendliness in his eyes. He amended hastily: "Guess I don't need to explain that to you, do I? What's your job?"

"Well," I said, "the Chief must have been keeping it a secret. I'm G-2." I explained how, at General Claggett's request, I had

come over from Selfridge Field, where I had been Base Intelligence Officer since the latter part of 1940.

"Good—maybe we'll be seeing a lot of each other."

"Sure," I agreed. "But first you have got to give up my office."

"Your office?" he said, a little puzzled.

"That's the G-2 Section you are sitting at and on, I'll have you know. And that's no place for the Chief of G-3."

Bud Sprague gave vent to his feelings in one of those hearty laughs. A boyish full-throated expression of fun that we were to find infectious in the later days at Military Plaza and afterwards at Fort McKinley. His trail ultimately took him to Borneo, Celebes, Australia, and a score of pitched battles against endless odds high above the fastness of Java and Timor. It was over Timor that he was last seen.

## *Homecoming*

Another withering morning. The sun seared through the heavens like an electric arc across one's eyeballs. At Pier 7 lay the large two-funneled, ocean-going liner bearing the eagle insignia of the American President Lines. Colonel Richards and I separated, he going along the ground level of the wharf and I mounting to the second story, for we did not know upon which level our returning Chiefs would come. They came both ways: General Claggett disembarking through the gangway on "C" deck, while Colonel George came across from the promenade. I met him.

Although the days (forming practically a month since they had departed) had been filled with activity and not enough rest, still I realized how much I had missed these contacts, from home as it were, when I saw the Colonel's dapper little figure coming toward me. His face, creased with the ever present laughing wrinkles from his cheekbones almost to the point of his chin, was like a strong stimulant to me.

"Hi, young fellow," he greeted. I reached out my hand. But he drew back. "No, not that. You see I am an untouchable, as it were.

Some kind of itch contracted in China. Don't even take my brief-case, or touch it."

And then I saw that his hands were covered with a white paste-and-powder preparation, as also were parts of his face. "It's pretty bad," he said, "although I am getting better. Almost made me sick."

And I knew it had been serious, because an admission from him of even slight physical inconvenience was the equivalent in some men of threatened prostration.

"But, tell me of your trip," I urged, as we approached the point where General Claggett was waiting, chatting with Colonel Richards. For a moment, the Colonel turned and looked straight at me. Then he spoke with an earnestness I cannot forget.

"Those Chinese . . . They are the most wonderful people on the face of this earth. Sometimes I lose faith in our own, myself included, but they will never let this world down. It is the Chinese who will win this war—and don't forget it."

We came up to General Claggett.

True, the morning was steamy-hot, and no man could be expected to present a roseate picture of health in such atmosphere. Nevertheless, I was shocked by his appearance. His skin hung loosely about his creased face. There was a pallor that extended up under his helmet; and his eyes looked tired and worn, sunk within innumerable skin folds above, beside, and beneath them. Perspiration beaded his forehead and patterned his face.

"Glad to see you again, young fellow," he rumbled, gnawing at the butt of his ever present cigar.

And I felt that he *was* glad to see me.

That afternoon I heard something of the story. And it was a fascinating recitation. They had had several visits with Madame and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. They had spent one unintendedly long evening there, too. Colonel George chuckled.

"Madame Chiang declared that the Japanese had heard of our arrival and were rendering us their particular brand of attention. We spent the evening alternating from the bomb-proof to the roof. The Generalissimo declined to come down. He was making constant observations of the method of Japanese attack and the

accuracy of their bombings. The only difficulty with that is that to prove complete accuracy meant the end of all studies."

He chuckled again. "But it gave me an opportunity of visiting at length with Madame Chiang, and I can say without reserve that there is one of the strongest personalities this world knows today. Possessing an intellect that encompasses everything down even to the fine details, Madame Chiang is amazing in her ability to control and direct even the most remote operations, and this without assistance of anyone."

From Chungking they had flown to all the major Chinese airports and to those in construction. Time after time they spiraled to fourteen thousand feet without ever leaving the precincts of the Chungking airfield before striking off. The dirtier the weather the better the Chinese pilots liked it. They would fly when the Japanese declined to leave the ground.

Colonel George spread a huge map on the floor of the room. "That's the prize," he said proudly, and well he could say it. It was a linenized spread some five by twelve feet, showing every tiny detail of the Chinese-Japanese front in all its intricate fluidity. Every airfield and running strip, real or projected, held by Chinese or snatched by the Japanese was there. His finger traced a line of squares in the lower right corner. "Here is where this war will see some important actions."

I read the words of the province.

"The Generalissimo asked us what we wanted, and promised that anything we wanted would be provided. When I suggested airfields here, and here, and here"—his finger moved along—"the Generalissimo merely nodded his head; and before we left China more than seventy thousand coolies were already on the job."

It was at the end of his first day that General Claggett called to me as we sat on the broad porch (the constant threat of gone-but-not-forgotten arthritis rendered him intolerant of electric fans). Obviously the heat was affecting him; his movements were spasmodic. There was a glistening pallor on his drawn features.

"I do not know whether you will be interested in my proposition," he said, speaking his words with characteristic slowness and in the depths of his chest, "but, in any event, you are to answer

exactly as you feel. Or don't answer today at all if you would like to think it over a day or so."

A dozen thoughts flashed through my mind, but none of them seemed to have origin or finish, so I waited.

"I shall need an aide-de-camp, and I shall be very happy if you can agree to serve in that capacity. I wish to assure you that the duties will not be pressing and will be at all times secondary to your main job as Intelligence Officer of this Air Force. In due time I shall require a second aide who is an Air Corps pilot. Think it over."

The following day Colonel George buttonholed me at the covered trestle connecting the main Headquarters with the old guardhouse portion of Fort Santiago. "Of course, you do as you wish," he began, "I mean about being an aide." He grinned and added, "I think this is the first time that I ever used that word without a descriptive."

"Descriptive?"

He grinned the wider, and his eyes twinkled. "Well, maybe it's not very nice," he said, and proceeded to describe with two biting adjectives which were all rolled into one with the word "aide," and said fast, like this: "godamaide!" But with that grin and that twinkle . . .

"I take it you don't like aides particularly," I chuckled.

"Oh, I guess they are all right. But—well, you don't want to be a dog-robber—seeing that the General gets his laundry on time, puts his tie on straight, and keeps his appointments with the most important ones, while avoiding the less important ones and still making them feel good about it." For several minutes he went on in this vein, and I was forced to the conclusion that being an aide-de-camp was not all that the romantic sound of the term implied. I practically decided to tell the General that I preferred to give my full attention to the Intelligence job, which itself was of sufficiently awesome proportions.

It was several days later that I spoke to the General. Colonel George was standing near by. And what I said was:

"Yes, sir, I shall be very glad to undertake the assignment as your aide."

I was almost as surprised at my words as the Colonel. But it was one of those moments when truth had its way. Honestly, I did fancy the job of aide and was possessed of a conviction that I could make the assignment mean something and accomplish it with benefit to both the General and myself. I never regretted the decision. It was to be the first of three such assignments. The following day I was named in orders as aide to General Claggett. Later, General Lewis H. Brereton, who came to the Islands to succeed General Claggett as Commander of the Far East Air Force, although he brought his two aides with him, mentioned to Colonel George that I was to serve as "ex-officio" aide. In this capacity I accompanied him later on an extensive and intensive survey of New Guinea, New Britain, and Australia. Lastly, I was to serve as aide to General George during his control of the 5th Interceptor Command on Bataan Peninsula and when he was Chief of Air Operations on the Staff of General George H. Brett in Australia.

The luscious repetition of rich Chinese dishes, garnished with all the lore of Far Eastern cuisine extending all the way from the dim reaches of ancient Cathay, had proved quite too much for even the famed Claggett stomach. That, together with the exhausting travel, had drawn heavily on the General's reserve so that, when he was able to ease down once more, the accumulated fatigue hospitalized him for the first, but not the last, time at "Sternberg" near Taft Avenue.

To characterize this as "unfortunate" would be the essence of understatement.

A vast amount of work had piled up during their absence, and scores of important matters were awaiting attention and decision. This ignored the urgent necessity for compiling and forwarding the report of the vital conferences and inspections in China, so impatiently awaited in Washington. The double load descended upon Colonel George. There seemed to be only one way to do it, and so we set forth, aided immeasurably by a Naval officer and one of our Attaché members from Chungking, both of whom had assisted in the inspections in China. It was not the last time that

Colonel George and I were to abolish the siesta hour of sleeping, turn the fans upon ourselves, and work through the hot afternoons. He dictated directly, giving his impressions as he remembered them and stopping only to qualify with documentary evidence he brought back. His admiration for the Chinese was boundless, and from that day on he maintained stoutly that the Chinese people would save civilization.

"It started there," he would say, "and it will end there."

Then he would amend:

"Or at least it will end for all of us except the Chinese. There is no power on earth that can eliminate the Chinese people. They are too resilient. They are not stiff and brittle, as we are inclined to be. They will absorb blows until their enemies are absorbed along with them, and there will still be China and the Chinese."

Each day we would report to Sternberg Hospital and review for General Claggett the progress of the report and the other matters pressing for decision.

One day about noon time the Colonel, who had been gone for hours, came into Headquarters, his brown eyes snapping.

"I have found the place of all places for underground protection of our stores, supplies, and even some of our aviation gasoline," he said. "It's a 'natural,' but it will require a good deal of work. We have got to present it in good shape for the General, so let's get to work."

As he described the place I wrote it down; and indeed it seemed the answer to our incessant worry as to what to do for adequate protection against bombing. Everything we had was on the surface. Not so the Japanese, whose molelike activities on Formosa had put much of their gasoline stores, a good share of their ammunition and even machine shops, hangars, and barracks underground. One had only to look at the packed and looming warehouse of the Philippine Air Depot, at that time under the command of Lieutenant Henry Thorn, son-in-law of General Claggett, to realize that one stick of bombs accurately placed would practically denude us of all the supplies so vital to maintaining our little Air Force—not to speak of wartime operations.

"Now that you have written all about it, let's go see it." And

with that the Colonel clapped his helmet on his head of dark hair now showing gray, especially above the temples, and we drove eastward into the suburbs and the higher ground there. Past a massive crumbling church, we went, and on up, higher yet, to what had something of the appearance of an old Spanish mission. Actually it was an old Spanish school building, we were told. Thick-walled and heavy-floored. But beneath this structure was a startling series of tunnels. They were part of the old water works system. There were perhaps thirty acres of high, wide bores splendidly formed by craftsmen who knew the art of the perfect arch. Several hundred yards along in the moist lamplighted gloom, we found a group of Filipinos loading blue-gray muck in buckets which were hoisted through an airshaft. They were enlarging one of the tunnels to form a room. This part of the tunnel system we could not use, as it was anticipated that here would be a storage point for munitions. But practically everything else was available. With four to six feet of earth above the tunnel arches it would not offer too much of an engineering problem to pile enough additional riprap on top to give us protection against all but the very heaviest bombs. Of course ventilation against gas attack would still be necessary, and illumination, sleeping quarters for action crews, offices, and much else. But . . .

With the plans drawn up, we drove to Sternberg. The General was sitting propped, looking quite hale, and gnawing an enormous black Manila. He greeted us in his rumbling voice and asked what mischief we had been up to. Colonel George confessed readily enough. He was convinced of the usefulness of these ready-made tunnels; but in vain he presented his argument. The General did not decline the proposition at once, and he asked for time to study it; but we both sensed that there was little to be expected from future discussions.

Leaving the hospital Colonel George was thoroughly depressed, and I think it was on that day that we both sensed something like true comradeship between us. I did not intrude upon his grim meditation as we drove back along the heat-flooded street towards Fort Santiago.

We were both prepared for the General's decision the next day.

He would not approve a construction program based upon figures compiled by Captain Eads, the alert, hard-working junior of the Philippine Department engineer and senior officer at No. 3 Military Plaza. He insisted upon waiting until he was well enough to make his own inspection and to study comparable figures on the Fort McKinley project. To say whether he would have fared better under Colonel George's plan is to indulge in flights of theory without knowledge of actualities. In this particular point at issue I inclined toward the General's views. The fact remains, though, that the tunnels under Fort McKinley were still being driven, air shafts were still being lined, and the blasts of dynamite charges were alternating with the explosions of bombs dropped by serene high-flying Japanese aircraft when the Manila evacuation order came. Except for a few feet near the entry at the Officers' Club no underground place was available for actual efficient use before the evacuation. Whether the water tunnels would have served us better remains one of those interesting possibilities for conjecture.

I felt that General Claggett endeavored always in the Philippines to take a mature, serious view of the scores of momentous questions that came to him for consideration. I am convinced that he fully realized the enormous responsibility. I am certain that he did not treat lightly the possibility of immediate hostilities; in fact, I am sure that he considered them certain. It is not difficult to reconcile this with his vehement opposition to the farseeing, soundly based, and ably presented plans which Colonel George eventually championed for the air defense of the Philippines. On the surface, it might seem so.

Looking back at the prewar period with some perspective, and thinking over the many conversations of our daily walks, I have come to the conclusion that General Claggett's long peacetime service, the collisions which any forceful individual will experience with higher authority, plus his amazing knowledge of regulations, created in him an understandable conservativeness that militated against his ready adjustment from peacetime restrictions to the unbelievable proportions of a new World War engulfment.

In the final analysis, the result would have been the same: loss of the Philippines in the initial stages of the war.

We simply were years and years too late.

Another Sunday morning.

I am awakened early by the din of automobile horns on Mabini. It is worshipers on the way to early mass.

It will be church for General Claggett and myself, too. Nearly every Sunday is church day.

"It may appear to be hypocritical," rumbles the General as we stroll slowly down Mabini to the intersection of Isaac Peral and thence to Florida, and the Cathedral of Mary and John. "But I prefer to attend church on Sunday. And I guess it won't hurt me—or the church."

He is devout during the services.

And carefully analytical of the sermon afterwards.

Inevitably we meet and pass the time of day with a small, vivacious little woman whose brown eyes speak friendliness and whose cheery greeting is something to which we both look forward.

She is Mrs. Douglas MacArthur, the Southern-born wife of the brilliant former Chief of Staff of the United States Army who is now military adviser to the government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines.

Back at Military Plaza No. 7 we find Colonel George stripped for tennis. But he is not playing tennis. It is merely his hot-weather informal garb for working. He looks up as we come in, and forsakes the supply problem upon which he is laboring long enough to chide us grinningly.

"Feel better now that your souls are saved for another week?"

"Definitely, sir," I assure him. "Why don't you forgo your waywardness and accompany us some Sunday?"

"I . . ." he exclaims. "What would a sinner like me be doing in church?"

"I might suggest it as an appropriate place," retorts the General, reaching for a cool one.

"No . . . I'm afraid that if the demands of this job ever allow

me into a decent, self-respecting church, it will be because I've gone haywire—or dead!" he finished, laughing.

There was nothing haywire about this little man. Nor was there anything even remotely unchristian in the definitely Golden Rule kind of life he practiced.

In the bright sunshine of that Manila day it didn't strike me for a moment that, as far as the rest of his remark was concerned, he had made a terribly prophetic statement.

### *Invitations . . .*

Gold and scroll. They originate at Manila's "Little White House," more correctly known as the Residence of the High Commissioner, Francis B. Sayre. This gleaming white structure, further dignified by spacious grounds surrounded by a tall metal spiked fence, is a combination of government office building, reception center, and residence. In the center is a delightful natural fernery after the Spanish patio style. The ballroom is a wonderful semicircular place of gleaming floor, lofty ceiling, and cool, pale green panels. Just beyond is the portico which looks out directly onto Manila Bay. The dining hall is rich with hardwood panels, deep Chinese carpets, and the long table reflects each point of light from its satiny polished surface.

Our party, invited in honor of General Claggett and Colonel George, is not large. The tall Commissioner and his tall lady are more than socially gracious. They are friendly. Our little group becomes acquainted, easily, genuinely.

After cooling drinks we repair to the dining hall. From end to end the table is striped through the center by a carpet of fresh flowers. Gladioli, lady-of-the-night, and gardenia. And for each place a runner of the same lovely floral design marks the point of service. The china has a gold-encrusted design heralded by the Great Seal of the United States of America.

The courses are many. But the *pièce de résistance* is shredded chicken, so tender that one seems to be toying with mere taste. But strangely satisfying withal.

Among the guests: The new Spanish Consul General and his stately wife, entrancing with a pure white film of lace in a mantilla more than eight feet long. Across is Judge Haussermann, a wealthy operator of Luzon gold mines. And over here, a director of Standard Oil of the Orient. Beside me, an official of the Lykes Lines who, with his British wife, has been in Manila the same length of time as ourselves. The O'Neills. We like them. But our acquaintanceship will be short-lived. Tomorrow they go on to Singapore for a new assignment. We declare we shall meet again. Easy said . . . On my other side is Lieutenant Colonel Charles Backes, United States Army Air Corps. He has been one jump ahead of the Japanese for years . . . China, Manchuria, Shanghai . . . He now is assigned to head and train the Philippine Army Air Force. Will he have to run again? He grins. Could be!

Outside on the portico the night is cool and soft. There is the chuckling of the bay water against the stone abutment. Morse signals are fireflying rapidly from the yardarms of Navy vessels in the harbor.

I am having a delightfully difficult time understanding the Spanish Consul General's wife. She is learning English.

The General is having a difficult time extracting another cigar from his dinner jacket. He mutters something—in English.

We are enjoying ourselves.

We overstay.

General Jonathan M. ("Skinny") Wainwright.

His tall form in cool tropical whites unbends itself from the interior of a car bearing two silver stars on the plate, and comes up the steps to the porch and the waiting tall iced ones which General Claggett has had the impassive Emmanuel prepare in anticipation.

Small-headed is General Wainwright, and his head looks the smaller by reason of close-cropped hair.

"I never have thought enough of your darned Air Force to want to ask a favor of it," he begins frankly as he sinks into a chair. "But the roads are reported impassable in the extreme northern part of Luzon—up Aparri way. And I've got to get a recon-

naissance up there to see how things are. . . . You know, we might have visitors from Formosa up there one day."

"So?" General Claggett blew the word out with his cigar smoke.

"Yes. I'll trade one good airplane ride for that small building and some paint you're interested in. . . . Provided—"

"—that I don't pilot the bomber," finished General Claggett.

"Exactly. Is it a go?"

"Born horse trader," rumbled General Claggett. "You were the same way in school days at the Point . . . Remember when . . ."

And they were off, these two old-timers, one-time roommates at West Point.

"Yes, sir—a born horse trader," said the General one day later. "When Skinny doesn't trade any more—well, you'll know he can't!"

I was to remember that in the hopeless days of May 1942.

He came to me from Clark Field. His red face and laughing blue eyes targeted by a fiery ring of amazingly red hair—all the way around. Consistent he was, Lieutenant Arthur Edwards. There was fire in his soul, fire in his speech, fire in his actions, sparks in his eyes, and his hair spurted bristles of flame.

With the departure of official families to the States, the order had gone forth at Clark Field, "No shaving until further notice."

The variety and wealth of hirsute accomplishments upon the faces of the personnel stationed there defy statistical description, but surely none could combine consistency with colorful appropriateness more than did young Edwards. His closely packed bristles found origin in rich sideburns and continued their way down his cheek and around his chin in an unbroken proclamation of defiant facial pyrotechnics which were at once the object of comment among the Americans and of wonder and respect among the Filipinos.

Lieutenant Edwards was a showman, who knew the value of the impression he created. His personality literally exploded in your face. You felt that here was a human rocket who would simply explode whenever he wanted to move or talk, both of which were constant productions of his total vivid being. But if he was

a showman, it was because it served him to be that. He had ideas. He intended to put them across. He was clever enough to appreciate the truth of the factor of showmanship as ever a real one and an uneasy taskmaster.

Art was a trained navigator of the 19th Bombardment Group. He was also a philosopher. He was a natural teacher. He was a consummate psychologist; but, lest that imply the emphasis upon the academic, one should hasten to say that rather he was a consummate master in the art of applied psychology. He invariably came bearing gifts. He thought that, because he invariably came with a proposition to sell, this was wise. He admitted it without shame or hesitation. His percentage of hits was distressingly high. He prepared well in advance; his thinking was generally sound and—well, he was not bashful. So prolific and so spontaneous was this idea production that one was forced to adopt an almost defensive attitude. I remember, later on Bataan, Colonel George's warning:

"You must watch Edwards closely," he said. "I cannot say why, unless it is this: when . . . and if . . . Edwards makes a mistake, it will be a big mistake. Or at least it will be a mistake that will have big consequences."

I was to remember this on Bataan one moon-flooded night when the first realization clutched cold fingers at my heart that, unwittingly, Art Edwards had committed that mistake.

His short bristly hair seemed to stiffen at the thought. His darting eyes flashed. His words came in clipped staccato bursts, like the firing from a machine gun. I had put to him the question closest to the minds and hearts of all of us:

When would the Japanese move south?

He was Ernest Hemingway, and he had just returned from China. He had seen with the eyes of the trained observer. He had listened with the ears of one who knew that to learn truth one must listen to everything. But what he saw and what he heard were treated with the hard, acid analysis within his mind, which was a swift, impartial thinking machine.

"They do not want to come south now," he said shortly. "At

least, I believe that the Government as a whole does not want to come south. But there are two factors which may force them: a fanatic military group and"—he hesitated, and his quick eyes swept the circle which hung on his words—"yourselves."

"Ourselves?" I repeated, incredulously.

He nodded abruptly.

"Yes. The Jap knows we are getting stronger here. He is not the kind of individual to wait until we are able to offer battle in our own time. He hopes you will not get strong too rapidly, because he still has unfinished business in the west—Indo-China, maybe Malaya."

He paused.

"Japan must have oil. If the Netherlands East Indies and America do not agree to deal with her in quantities sufficient to enable her to keep her reserves intact, she will act. She will drive to the Netherlands East Indies."

His head jerked to each one of us in turn. "And"—he barked crisply—"she will take them."

Mr. Hemingway's acutely prophetic statements were to ring in our ears many times in subsequent months. To my mind it was rather a perfect example of the oft repeated phrase of those who had experienced the bitter test of one of life's paradoxes:

"Damned if you do, and damned if you don't."

From the other side of the vertical map board which served as a partition between our offices, the General's deep voice rumbled an indication that I should present myself. I did so.

"We leave tomorrow," he said, holding out a sheet of paper to me. "Read this, and I dare say it will occur to you that you are going to be a very busy young man for the next twelve, fifteen, or more hours." What I read was a letter order by command of Major General Grunert and signed by one of the most efficient adjutant generals I ever knew, Colonel Carl H. Seals, later, during Corregidor days, to be Brigadier General Seals. The order stated:

By authority of the Secretary of War in radio one one four naught (1140) from the War Department dated July 18, 1941, and under the provisions of Section II, War Department Circular No. 128, dated November 4, 1940, it is directed as necessary in the military service that you proceed by commercial air transportation, on or about July 22, 1941, to Singapore on temporary duty as Observer and upon accomplishment of this temporary duty return to your proper station, Manila, P.I.

Singapore! To the western mind this truly was the Mecca of all that represented the bizarre—mixture of the occidental and the oriental. To the military, a mysterious stronghold, which propaganda, sometimes subtle and sometimes direct, had erected in our minds as a veritable Gibraltar, lacking the physical characteristics of the Rock, but possessing, if anything, greater latent strength, which the Japanese indeed would find to his dismay should his boldness encourage him to venture against it.

"Congratulations."

I turned. It was Colonel George. His friendly eyes were confirming the words he spoke.

"I am glad for you," he said, "but . . ." His voice became serious. "You've a whale of a job there. The General is taking you primarily because you have an eye trained to see what there is to be seen and a mind that can record it. He is depending on you. So am I."

I thanked him for his warm words and added quickly: "Then you are not coming?"

His right hand snatched a thick file of papers. He raised the clipped bulk of correspondence and regarded it with a wry smile.

"Looks like I am going to have a pretty rough journey myself," he said, chuckling. "Airfield constructions. I have really got something here, and if I can make it go while you are absent—well, we will all have something. And, boy, we need it!"

The General's big cigar poked its way into my vision at that moment. I turned to him.

"Lieutenant Colonel Lester Maitland, Commander at Clark Field, will accompany us," he said, giving me another set of orders. "Call

him and tell him to come at once, prepared to take off early in the morning. We go by clipper—that is, we do, provided you will get yourself into the car and hop over to the Quartermaster for our transportation vouchers, then on to Pan American for the tickets. There is also a little matter of getting yourself and Lieutenant Colonel Maitland watertight passports. I have mine from the China trip, but you must get it validated for—now, let me see.” He blinked his half-closed eyes in a characteristic manner, and his cigar swept across an inclusive arc. “Make it for the Island of Singapore and the Federated and Unfederated Malay States.” He bit a long sliver out of his cigar. “For good measure you had better visit your friend Dr. Willem Huender, the Dutch Consul, and have him fix them for the Netherlands East Indies—just in case, you know.”

I blinked. “You mean . . .”

The General rubbed his hand over his face with a circular motion, another very characteristic movement of his. “I do not mean anything, young man. I said, just in case.”

The day was a whirlwind of preparation. Colonel Maitland arrived shortly before noon, and in two hours’ time, thanks to the excellent offices of the really good-natured but seemingly highly irritable assistance of the High Commissioner’s Chief of the Passport Division, Mr. Ross, we were in possession of the treasured booklets. Then visits to the British and Dutch Consuls. At Pan American, I was told:

“You will be passengers on the maiden voyage of the largest and newest clipper to be put into this service. She is the *Anzac*. She departs from Cavite promptly at six o’clock in the morning.”

“Oh, East is East . . .”

Singapore. “City of the Lion,” in the colorful phrasing of the Buddhist prince who landed his army on the island at the tip of the Malay Peninsula. That was more than six hundred years ago. “Singapura,” he called it. And indeed in this modern day it is a city of the lion. But a different one from his dramatic conception

envisioned at that distant date. For now it is the British lion whose tawny strength manifests itself on every hand. A strength gathering itself for the test. It was a brown man from the west who came in 1639. His establishment was firm. But a white man from the north displaced him. Stamford Raffles. Tributes to his foresight greet you on every hand: buildings, businesses, streets, bear his name. A white man from the north. But once again the tide sweeps. Which way? And again it threatens to be the yellow man. This time from the east.

And the world moves on . . . endlessly . . . endlessly. Flat-chested Chinese women. Full-breasted Javanese. And Malayans with alert intelligent faces and finely molded heads. Dusky sons of Mohammed with brilliant slendang and fleckless black songkoh. Most of them lean. Many in sarongs or European sack coats, possibly with a ponderous linked gold chain disappearing from the lapel into the breast pocket—like an anchor line disappearing beneath the surface of the water. Well boned Englishmen. Colonials who likely had their turn in Sudan, far south at the Cape, or amid India's millions. Thought their tour on the Malayan station might be of a year or so. But the years have come and gone, and they have not. Oh, well . . . Carry on, you know.

The heat goes out of the sun. The sun goes out of the day. And night comes swiftly. There is an overlap of activity. The shops remain open until after dark. But suddenly, as if by signal, there is a thinning out. The *clip-clop* of wooden heels is clear and sharp, even in this unmoving heat that now seems to issue from the earth itself. As though intent upon drawing through the night to the sun now gone into the western world. But this anemia of life is only transient. For now the city is reborn, and as quickly as they disappear, thousands again throng the sidewalks, the pavements. Fan tan. Chess back of beaded curtains in atmosphere solid with smoke, fumes and thumping odors, the gambling dens pack the walls and every inch of space with oriental gamesters. A gambler, born and bred and living, the Chinese. Black jack and fan tan. And no white man knows the stakes. Too often, as along the whole China coast, it may be the most eligible daughter of the house. Sold into prostitution to pay off. Every type is there.

Wealthy merchant. Street snipe. Professional man. And a pirate from the Macao coast. The rake of the croupier gathers in only money in the last move. But it is his monotonous call for bets and his toothed collector that gather in the human elements from all Asia.

Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, supreme military commander of the British Far East, coordinates Army, Air, and Navy. His title: Air Chief Marshal. His home: a fine old estate on the gently hilled heights of the city. Himself: typically, the older generation of English colonial. A perfect host, but not centralized in himself. It is because his household in its entirety is an extension of his own personality—the slender-faced, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and black-booted Briton. Stoop-shouldered, drawling in speech. But of ready mind. Not warm. But of undoubted magnetism. The household routine is precise. The evening ends early. The master retires to his room for sleep. His responsibilities are tremendous. Only in cases of utmost urgency is his rest disturbed. It may be a telephone call on the “green line”—an automatic speech scrambler which gives secrecy on otherwise ordinary land lines. The call may be from the frowning fortress in the heart of the city. From the Naval Base. Or from the far-flung airdrome just under the Thailand frontier, far up the rugged peninsula. And the great game of international poker moves forward another step. Whither? Singapore Island and Johore are besprinkled with good airdromes. Not enough, perhaps, but well built and wonderfully equipped. Partial list: Tengah, Seletar, Sembawang, Kallang, Kluang. Then some in-between ones built and building. And way up under the Thailand frontier, Alor Star and Kota Bharu. Seletar is the strong hub. But even here is something that must give uneasy reflections to Sir Robert’s franker moments. There are too few airplanes. There are too few antiaircraft guns. A bit further on, the Australians have taken over at Sembawang. Hudson bombers, mainly. We watch them “bomb up.” Despite a refractory engine and a stubborn bomb rack, the last Hudson lifts heavily into the sky only fourteen minutes after the crews ran in full harness to their waiting ships.

The Naval Base. Separated from the main peninsula by Johore

Straight. A vast concentration for servicing the ships of both peace and war. Heavily guarded. And new defense units going in at all points. A wounded cruiser in the dry dock. Her bow has been blown off by an aerial torpedo. For the third time. But she came in at 21 knots. She is a veteran. Her name is famous. She is the *Glasgow*. She has avenged her namesake—another *Glasgow*, long since a rusting hulk, riddled by German shot off Coronel in that other war. And also under South American waves.

Startling news in the evening paper. General Douglas MacArthur recalled from retirement, to head up all of our military forces in the Philippine theater. That meant the Air Force, too, of course. And that meant action, too. For such was General MacArthur. General Grunert no doubt would be reassigned to a States post. Well, we had gained one friend. But lost another.

That night we discussed it with soft-speaking, leather-faced Colonel Claire L. Chennault. On his way to Chungking. Secret job. I listened entranced while he discussed points of the plan to organize a small, compact, hard-hitting force of guerrilla pilots, all volunteers from the cream of the fliers. Here was a graduate of the same school of thought in air combat and how to get ready for it as Colonel George. Will the Japanese get a surprise? Well, I think they will. And how!

The motors roar to the full. The whole sturdy fabric of the bomber trembles, and the wheels begin to skip swiftly over the take-off strip. Bump . . . Bump . . . And rapidly airdrome buildings and trees whip down and away from us. Far below, a tiny blob hurtles over the tangled mass of Malayan jungle with amazing speed. Nor is it interrupted in the slightest by the formidable obstructions in the form of ragged clefts and gulches that even at this height appear deep. Bodies of emerald water, clearings, solid walls of jungle growth, sudden little villages, and an unexpected loop of the China Sea curving in to make an assault on the land . . . Nothing stops it, the tiny little blob. In an hour it beats across a distance that would take weeks of indescribable labor overland . . . Our shadow. Traveling at the rate of—a glance at the indicator amid the maze of dials on the instrument board—194 miles an hour.

The big, American-built machine is loafing, actually. But why waste fuel and crowd motors when there is no need? The mission may be grimmer next time . . .

We tire of our position in the copilot's seat. So we go to the rear and clamber into the "blister." It's just a bit crowded there with all the machinery for operating the twin machine guns whose ugly snouts extend through special slots to the outside. But the view is magnificent. We are above the airplane itself, really. Like a great fish it appears. And we are riding on its back. The wind shrieks here. But it is snug inside the blister. We glance down. And swallow. Snug, yes. But there is so precious little between us and that almost-a-mile straight down into the jungle. It is thrilling . . .

Kota Bharu. This air outfit has accomplished wonders in the short time it has been here. True, should the Japanese make an attack on this very hot day—like every other day up here—we wonder just what these brave lads would use for antiaircraft defense. There are machine-gun emplacements. And they've improvised searchlight units and just about everything else, converting something out of nothing. But again, there are no fighter aircraft. Bombers only. Mostly Hudsons, like the one sizzling heat waves from its metal body out there now, waiting for us to reenter its frying interior for a run back to Singapore. There are a couple of Blenheims and one ancient old fellow I don't recognize.

Another day . . . another airplane. This time a huge flying boat. Four engines of great power. A clipper. Five compartments for several passengers each. Forward is the mail. Bags of it. Express, too. Even freight. Above are the pilot officers, the radio compartment, the navigator's table, the engineer's control board. From there tunnel ways lead through the wings to the roaring motors. Far, far below is the equator. Latitude is exactly zero here. We sit down and pass the time of day . . . a little latitude and longitude, as it were, with a quick-eyed brunette lady passenger. Singapore to Australia. She is a spy.

The red line hitches its way across the face of the navigator's map. Printed over the blue ocean's depth . . . Pengalap Straits . . .

Berhala Strait . . . Banka . . . Then the vegetablelike green of Sumatra's fever-ridden rivers curling through heat-filled swamps . . . Lucipara Point slipping beneath . . . The unmoving cobalt of the Java Sea . . . Sunda Strait . . . And Batavia.

Batavia. Dutch sailors in unfamiliar blue straw hats. And a spotless motor launch from clipper to customs. We wind between the towering bulks of vessels, now mighty, but mere unmoving mites from five thousand feet. Money declaration. Polite but unmoving officials who list your funds and advise that no more may be taken out of the country than was brought in. And they do mean it.

The canals. Public hygiene on a metropolitan scale. Or lack of hygiene on an appalling scale. Heavily laden water moving slowly between stone walls. And everywhere along the stepped-back walls and in the ascent steps, entirely unabashed by the roving eye, are scores and scores of native inhabitants engaged in the multitudinous little tasks peculiar to the homely business of cleaning self and clothes.

Dr. Walter Foote. American Consul General. And a more gleamful eye and comfortable paunch we've not seen in many a day. He's real. Has had to be, with his twenty-year record in the Consular Service, almost half of it in Sumatra and Java. Right now, especially. For the pressure is on: America is only offering honeyed words, the harried Dutch are told—just waiting to pick the pockets of every nation at war; they'll never send a man or a ship actually to fight. So get wise, and tie up with the right bandwagon. It's Walter Foote who more than once has countered all that.

The civil airport. But very military in these days of war. Only official passes of the highest order satisfy the obviously mistrusting sentries. Javanese, they are, in the Dutch army. But the Dutch, wise colonists and shrewd militarists that they are, do not attempt entirely to Europeanize the native trooper. True, he has his short carbine. Vicious Mamalicks. And bayonet, too. But these are the white man's weapons. He can use them; his little black eye is unwavering and accurate. But in close fighting he reverts. And so at his side is his razor-edge basilong. Utterly deadly, because with it he is utterly fearless.

Again an American-made bomber, medium. The instrument board—crowded with meters, dials, multifigured faces, levers, buttons, handles, gauges—is lettered partly in English nomenclature and partly in strange Dutch terms. We rise sharply. These Indies pilots do not dally. They “climb the ladder” straight up, standing the straining bomber on her tail. Suddenly they level off, the motors cease their enormous exertions. We wing over and shoot off to the southeast. Below are the red tile roofs and the orderly palms of Batavia. Slipping rapidly away and merging into the mirrorlike expanses with thin borders . . . Rice paddies. Acres, acres—miles and miles of semi-flooded country to feed the hungry hordes of the Orient. Down there, invisible from this height, human hands manipulate water, earth, and combine them with sunlight to effect agricultural alchemy as old as man himself. Food, that he may prolong his existence amid that same earth and water. Why . . .

Now the country is all askew. Even the rice paddies give up. Rock-spined ridges. And vertical granite scarps rising sheer from the tangled green. Yet man has been here, too. The vista opens slightly, and like a tiny, thin snake, a railroad train labors on a steep grade sliced deep into the groin of the mountain. And holding back the steaming jungle by the very bamboozled walls of its houses is a village. And another. More, until there is a line of them leading up to the very eyes of a vast structure which once was a heaven-dwelling peak. Great tides of heated air rise from the jungles and rush up the sides of the ridges. We dive. And shoot upward with breath-taking velocity. A frail ship in an angry sea of nothing. We tighten our life belts another notch, and put our full faith in good Dutch piloting and honest American workmanship . . . Man wins. The naked vertebra of the ridge passes beneath and behind. The slopes fall rapidly away to a dream valley. And the clean precision of Java’s sixth city . . . Bandoeng.

Even a period of intense inspection activity cannot dim the appeal of this gem among cities. Here truly the East is the East and the West is the West. And the twain do not meet. Although certainly they rub shoulders. The starchiest contrasts from one business

street to another. Here, Bragaweg. Continental smartness with every popular brand. And here, Groote Postweg. Amid its ever moving sea of brown-skinned humanity the Orient speaks its strange, fascinating tongues and pours forth its multiodored reminders of a way the other half lives. Mohammedan and Christian. Javanese, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and everything between. Japan is pouring a flood of cheap trade goods into this country. And satisfying a great need thereby. We meet this competition with difficulty. Our lines of transport are too long; our labor rates, too high. It is understandable that there is a reluctance to offend Japan or sever trade routes with her.

We are slowed in our work. General Claggett is ill. Lieutenant Colonel Maitland and I carry on while he tosses in his bed with fever and pain. A provisional diagnosis is malaria. He's had it many times in his life, but the Dutch army doctor opines that this was contracted lately.

And now come further orders from Manila. We are not to return to Singapore. Colonel Richards comes from Fort Santiago and brings with him tall, slender Colonel Walker, the ordnance officer. There is a third. Lieutenant Colonel Brink who has come down from Singapore. The Dutch authorities have indicated grave concern to Washington regarding the nondelivery of munitions vitally needed if these islands are to sustain even a moderate attack. Can it be that bad? That's what Manila and Washington want to know. We are to ascertain the truth.

We do. Daily long and exhausting inspections to airdromes, army installations, munitions plants, schools of military instruction and everything else of pertinent value are covered by our party breaking into small groups. And our faces are serious as we compare notes. The Dutch have not been indulging in dramatics. They are tragically short of almost everything lethal. A few fighter planes, mostly Buffaloes. A few bombers, mostly Glenn Martins, similar to but better than our B-10, and some outfits better than our B-18's. Then they have some Lockheed 12's and Lodestars. The concrete gun emplacements for airdrome defense are there. But they are empty. The Dutch have rounds of fire for a very few full days. And such a wild diversity of ordnance! Seven different calibers

of cannon, much of it captured on the various fighting fronts, have been sent to the Indies. Included in the last lot was a brace of Italian Caproni types. But where does one get shells for that? Italy? Likely. But Italy isn't in the shipping mood. There is even a shortage of machine-gun and rifle ammunition. Is it any wonder that these high service officers wear faces of serious lines and grim glances? They see a serious and grim picture. And they are calling for help that must come with all speed.

Charming Dutch hospitality. Sunday dinner. General Berenshot, the commander in chief, and his lady are our host and hostess. And truly within marble halls, all illumined softly and coolly from above by a chromatic skylight. The toast to the Queen. Then general and genial conversation.

And later another dinner at unbelievable Villa Isola. Hollywood in its extravagance of architecture, appointments, and landscaping. The dream castle of a romantic N.E.I. newspaper publisher. Never lived to indulge his fancy. His life was crushed out in an airplane accident just before Isola was completed. Now the government operates it as a special guest house. In another of the dining rooms looking out on an intoxicating scene across the Bandoeng valley to the mountains beyond is a party including the celebrated explorer of the Arctic via the Jules Verne and Ned Nestor route: Sir Hubert Wilkins. He and Lieutenant Colonel Maitland greet each other enthusiastically. Brother members of the famed Explorers' Club.

Repeated trips to Batavia. And here is a reflection of the view previously expressed by Dr. Foote that the Americans make some show of strength visible to the Javanese man in the street. This time it comes from the Australian chief of information. Couldn't we send a flight of bombers over on a good-will trip from the Philippines to Australia, thence to the N.E.I. and return? "Be worth tons of propaganda," he says. And I entirely agree. A long conference with the Dutch Admiral Helfrich. A determined man.

Then, one morning at the pale hour we take off from well guarded Andir Airdrome and, spiraling above the awakening city we so reluctantly quit, swing into the east. Soerabaja, the great Dutch naval base in eastern Java, our destination. The big Lode-

star seems suspended motionless, becalmed on a limitless opalescence through which a single beautifully tapered island rises in perfect symmetry. The cone of a still active volcano, really. Our altimeter says 11,300 feet. Yet the peak shows above our starboard wingtip.

Our coming is well radioed in advance. Nevertheless, before we raise the big naval base on the horizon, swift Dutch fighter planes knife the air close to us to have a look-see. We drop through the cool stores of the heavens and land in a steam of heat. With characteristic thoroughness the Dutch have planned our itinerary. There are lectures and demonstrations. The air warning service. Then searchlight and antiaircraft firing drill. And a prolonged inspection of the base.

And then a final dinner at the base club, the Moderlust. Two rear admirals, a bevy of generals, ours and theirs. The toast to the Queen. And to the President.

That completes it. For although he has not complained, General Claggett's appearance has caused me no small anxiety. En route to the hotel he confesses. A relapse. And finally, having been forced to the letdown, he is all but in a state of collapse when we arrive at the Oranje. The Dutch surgeon is adamant about flying. He must return to Manila by steamer. Arrangements are rushed. We can fly as far as Batavia, provided we fly over the sea at moderate altitude. Reluctantly we board one Lockheed and nose west to Batavia over the Java Sea while a Lodestar takes the rest of the party on an eastern line for Bali. Thence to Borneo and the Philippines. At Batavia they are holding the *Tjinegara*. She slips away from her moorings almost as soon as we are aboard.

The heaving waters of the China Sea are trimmed in lacy foam today. In the distance slowly rises again the unbelievable green of the Philippine Islands. Luzon. Bataan Peninsula. Mariveles harbor. And to the left, the towering heights of Corregidor. We lose headway and signal. The streaming conning tower of a submarine thrusts itself out of the depths of North Channel. A brief exchange of signals. We move further, and one of the familiar Navy tugs from Manila harbor plows through spume to guide us through the mine-fields to the breakwater. We call it home now. Quarantine regulations are waived as the General and I are trusted to the attentions

of an Army doctor. But it is not the familiar sights of the Bay that cause little jumps inside of me. It is that small figure with the snapping brown eyes and the wide smile, waiting to grasp our hands and welcome us home. It is Colonel George.

"You've got tons of mail from home and a new office at Nielson Field to read it in!" he exclaims warmly. And all over again I feel the impelling magnetism of this man.

Later in the day the doctors have agreed to General Claggett's assertions that he has so far recovered that it is not necessary for him to reenter Sternberg, although his old room is ready and waiting for him.

### *In Your Corners*

It was on the tortuous, tricky route from Pasay, or southern Manila, through San Pedro Makati, jammed with a seething miscellany of humans, carromata ponies, dogs, and the rest of the never ceasing animation of an eastern center, that Colonel George referred for the first time to the project that was closest to his head and heart:

The aggressive air defense of the Philippines.

The pivots upon which his plan revolved were twofold: strength and aggression—immediate strength sustained by immediate replacements—and flexible, lightninglike aggression.

"Nothing else will do it," he would say repeatedly with heat and emphasis. "If we play at any smaller game than this, they'll wipe us out of the Pacific. Listen. The picture is not pretty. It's plain ugly. They can smear us in our own blood in a month. Nothing less than this will give us even a fighting chance."

"But you'll never put it over with the General," I said, not pessimistically, but as though stating an existing fact.

"I'll try to so hard that I'll go down fighting. I won't give up. I'm absolutely convinced about this. If I do it, it will be little enough for all the country has given me. If I don't . . ." He turned and stared out of the window into the hot Manila night. "Well, then I repeat what I said. I'll go down with it, because I'll fight

until I'll have to be sent home for insubordination!" His voice was hard, chilled. As I listened, I knew I had heard an expression of unalterable determination.

Then followed a succession of unforgettable night conferences with General Claggett. They took place at the quarters, both before and after dinner. It was an inflexible rule that no shop was talked at the dinner table. And although these two men might figuratively be at each other's throats both previous to and immediately after dinner, their meal was taken in an apparently congenial and amiable atmosphere—although I suspect this never penetrated very deeply within the unrelentingly persistent little Colonel.

The main point of departure was struck exactly where we suspected it would be—the size of the proposed force.

"You want ten groups of this, eight groups of that, and six of something else," growled the General, wrangling his cigar. "Young man, you more than amaze me, you render me quite uncomprehending—that you, an experienced Army man and Air Force officer, should even entertain the thought of demanding such preposterous totals." He expelled his smoke like a cannon shot. "Do you," he demanded, "really know that there may be from twenty-four to seventy-five airplanes in a single group? Do you actually have knowledge of the Tables of Basic Allowances and Tables of Organizations?"

It was true. The Colonel's plan involved perfectly astounding totals of airplanes. Not so astounding in light of present-day war totals. But for the summer of 1941 . . . Now a modern group may include some thirty-six heavy bombers, or as many as seventy-five fighters. Then, when we consider that for every machine in the air, some pilots, mechanics, servicemen, supply men, administration officers, and supporting troops of a dozen other branches—such as engineering, chemical warfare, radio—are required, it is easy to understand General Claggett's perfectly reasonable demand as to just from what source—from whose hat, this gigantic air rabbit was to be jerked.

"Ask for 'em!" was the Colonel's laconic answer to his chief's demand. "We'll certainly not get 'em if we don't."

The strain was a corrosive thing. But it was as hard for one as

for the other, and one day the General called me. His face was dogged as ever. But there was that punched-dough look and complexion I knew and feared.

"You're ill, sir."

"I've felt happier, young man."

"I think you really ought to turn in sick, sir," I said earnestly. It was not pleasant for me to be in the middle in this fight. I admired and respected the qualities of both men. My convictions, though, were with the Colonel and his seemingly almost fanatical schemes.

"I think that you think correctly."

He went to the hospital, back to his old room at Sternberg. It was to be the first of the series of disablements that persisted up to and through those days when the lightning struck from the Japanese Islands.

And so the load fell again upon the shoulders of "the little Colonel." It was during the last of the summer months and the beginning of fall that the tempo of ship arrivals became noticeably rapid. Instead of being an event marked for celebration, the arrival of a ship, even a considerable one with troops aboard, was simply an occasion for the quartermaster to get a hump on and find new storage-floor space and for the adjutant's office to scratch up new quarters for the latest comers. And then came the day when the corridors at the still very much unfinished Nielson Air Force Headquarters building were crowded with a variety of officers whose mixed uniforms proclaimed them as recent arrivals from America. A whole shipload of Air Corps personnel!

"And it's only the first," grinned Colonel George that noon. "They are doing things now. They want to know what we want. And we've got to tell them. We must put that plan over. There is no time to lose. . . . Come in after lunch. I've an interesting find for you."

The "find" proved to be a tall, long-faced chap with a little mustache above a ready smile and friendly blue eyes that bespoke sincerity and loyalty. His name was Bell: "Lou" Bell. He was from Denver, Colorado. He possessed combat intelligence experience, having served in S-2 and G-2 organizations in Corps Area estab-

lishments. I liked him at once. The feeling was entirely reciprocal. The Colonel's "find" truly was—just that. I never had one moment to regret my immediate decision to request his being named Assistant S-2, either then or during the bitter days that were piling up more closely with every sweep of the hands around the clock.

No mention of this period could be complete as far as the Intelligence office was concerned without a tribute to the splendid work that had been accomplished in my absence by Captain Charles Tyler and the now Corporal Roulston in the preparation of bombing objective folders. Contributed to by Lieutenants Edwards and Arter, the folders had been expanded from the slenderest beginnings to fat columns of figures and logistics. I was amazed. The work represented had been prodigious. And it had two targets. One was Japan. The other was General Claggett! For these logistics were to show him in cold figures just how much of an attack force would be necessary to do nothing more than *carry* the bombs required to blast even moderate damage into the vital Japanese installations in Hainan, Formosa, and the main Japanese Islands. This was to say nothing of the force that would be required to escort these bomb-carrying craft. It was to leave unmentioned, losses. We had information of a certain total number of vital targets. It took so many of a given type and weight of bomb to reduce such targets, counting in a fair proportion of misses and duds. It required so much gasoline to keep heavily laden airplanes in the air from Clark Field to Aparri to Formosa and Japan—and back! Add it all up. The totals were staggering. So was the job, if we had any idea of doing it. It was with these figures that we'd back up our arguments.

"Nothing less will do it," repeated Colonel George. "We must get it across so that General Claggett will feel impelled to forward the plan to General MacArthur. I feel that, once we do that, it will be easier. There is a man who knows the answers. And he knows they can't be halfway ones."

So the battle raged. Before he was released from Sternberg, General Claggett demanded to be presented with the finished plot. He went through the accumulated data in the objective folders—and promptly rejected appreciable portions on the basis that our air

force never should, or never would, bomb such targets as barracks or municipal structures.

"But you must fight total war with total war," insisted Colonel George. "Barracks, after all, are military establishments. Municipal buildings inevitably are utilized in emergencies by the military, even as we do it ourselves."

But the General was adamant. And a general revision of totals was demanded. When this exhausting piece of work had been finished, we had made a total saving of possibly half a dozen bombers and a hundred thousand gallons of fuel out of several million. No more.

For a time it appeared that victory was in sight, and that General Claggett would discuss the plan with General MacArthur. At least his arguments were less vociferous. He listened more. He granted a point here and there. He was cracking! He even took the manuscript and studied it for several days.

And then came the day.

The Colonel was quite prepared to accept a complete refusal—which would have been the signal for another attack. Or he was preparing for a further wrangle upon the lines of the previously well trodden routes, but he was not prepared to receive the hybrid that was placed in his hands. We could recognize our own offspring. But that was all. It seemed to us that strength, conviction, character, and *raison d'être* had disappeared from the greatly abbreviated version submitted for our examination.

General Claggett had rewritten it entirely. Guided by his penchant for cryptic expression he had sliced through it with red pencil and scissors. He had reordered and rephrased it.

Amazingly enough, he had accepted and retained for the most part those terrific totals Colonel George had tried so uncompromisingly to preserve. But to us it appeared that he had censored out the supporting substance that would have sold the idea to General MacArthur, or would have assisted General MacArthur in selling the program of aggressive defense to the War Department and Congress.

This, then, was what General Claggett proposed to show to General MacArthur.

I recalled a conversation in which the General had referred frankly to his limitations in expressing himself on paper. He depended upon me for phrasings, and even then often had to convince himself that my more generous style was preferable to his clipped, stiff-bristled military form.

But here, in this instance, involving salesmanship which could be vital in its proportions and consequences, he had elected to forsake his admission and had reverted to his own cryptic style.

It was with little enthusiasm and less hope that we saw him bear off for Headquarters (USAFFE—the United States Army Forces in the Far East) at Number 1, Victoria, with the revised script. But it is to General Claggett's credit that, a few days later, he called Colonel George into his office and cheerfully admitted defeat.

"Hal," he said, blowing smoke rings to the ceiling, "I'm licked! . . . They like your way of putting it more than they do mine. In other words, General Sutherland and General MacArthur want to see the plan more as you originally conceived it and finally prepared it. Will you see that I get a fresh copy for presentation?"

A victory! . . . Yet a hollow one. For more utterly precious time had fled. It must be reiterated; had the plan been accepted the day it was finished, and had every effort both in the Philippines and at home been stretched to the utmost to bring it to reality, the military result—the loss of the Philippines to the Japanese—would have been the same. Only the time, the date of capitulation, would have been different; a month, a few months later, maybe. There simply wasn't time enough, in the few months allotted to us, remotely to approach compensation for the years of sound sleeping Uncle Sam had done with his snoring head pillowled on a copy of the "treaty" in which he had agreed not to fortify the Pacific Islands.

Facts and figures will show that shipments of material to the Philippines skyrocketed to an undreamed-of level during the fall months. Had Japan delayed her attack another year, it is quite conceivable that the George plan would have been in effect as a schedule to which the Air Force expansion would have been tempoed. True, modifications, some of them of major nature, probably would have been introduced by Generals MacArthur and

Sutherland as time and experience showed, but as a general pattern, as an ultimate goal, it could have served admirably. Of that I am convinced.

### *Manila Miniature*

Esperanza. Her name.

A Spanish name; a Spanish word, really. It means—Hope. Hope for what?

In the depths of her black eyes there was more than hope. A sublimity. A faith; luminous, profound, and forever virginal. This there was, which is immeasurably more than hope, for hope implies something of human yearning, something born of mingled desire and doubt.

There was nothing of doubt, nothing of fear, nothing of distrust in Esperanza's gaze. Yet the fount of this did not spring from an isolation from the realities of the world, from an unassimilating ingenuousness. Rather, the reverse was true: a keenness of perception was her blessing, a delicious, inclusive perception her heritage.

A fine, clear forehead arched beneath by the dark twin semi-loops of perfectly brushed eyebrows and gently columned by a straight nose wider at the base than that of her Nordic sisters, but of harmony and line at once sustaining and sustained by the gentle curve of her soft brown skin over the high cheekbones. Her lips, vital and warm, yet not too full, forever caressed the ghost of a smile, seldom giving it free birth to reveal the even white teeth beneath. Her small but adequate and firm chin bespoke a proudness of spirit not measured in terms of comparison with others, but a deeply inherent self-respect and a quiet resoluteness which championed the deep inner promptings of an essentially religious nature. Her throat broadened into fine, erect shoulders and rounded, full breasts, sculptured exquisitely to complete the concentric plan of a tapering waist and the melodic flow of her hips.

Esperanza came to us there at Military Plaza seeking employment as a *lavandera*. Via the mysterious grapevine, as swift as it is unerring, she had received news of the arrival of the new Air Force

General and his little, quick-moving colonel. There were other applicants. But Esperanza led the field, easily and without apparent effort. Later, though, we learned how shrewdly she had calculated her time, how deftly she had measured the total situation and played her little game both with us and with her competition in a manner which marked her as a consummate tactician—and which in some small part may have accounted for the tiny flame of a smile that lighted the happy laughter in her eyes.

Esperanza moved in her own world—one peopled, I'm sure, by delightful creatures of sprightly hearts, warm, caressing touch and voices as far echoes in a summer's night.

Hers was a life of toil. The pride that sustained her in all things was a harsh mistress. Far into the night she would labor exactly to iron and fold the product of the day's washing. There was no postponement, no compromise with perfection. I have seen her so drooped with fatigue that she was fairly whipped in her attempts to maneuver the very ample expanses of General Claggett's tropical uniforms over the ironing board—but she never gave up.

Trouble filled her dark eyes when the headlines grew blacker in ink and import. Violence was a theme of crazy unnecessary. With the approach of trouble her little circle of friends quietly dissolved until only a few remained in Manila. What did she prefer to do? we asked her. What did we wish her to do? she queried in return, her gaze direct and searching. Did we need her? Yes, but . . . For answer she went silently back to her ironing board and smilingly shook her head when we sought to reopen the question.

Then the move to Fort McKinley. The laundry situation was critical; the wholesale exodus of lavanderas to the provinces had created a real problem. Did she wish to go, or rather, didn't she . . .

"You need me. I will stay if you will let me."

And she did; remained through hellish nights of alarms and days of bellowing explosions from enemy-filled skies. Each shrieking siren would find her running lightly and silently to the prescribed tunnel shelter, my musette sack clutched in her small brown hand, to sit on the lowest step, an enigmatic smile on her slightly upturned lips as she listened to civilization's hail of hell and destruction above.

Our fate crowded inevitably around us, and the evacuation order came. We placed her in the safest hands we knew in Manila.

As we left, the dark misery of her eyes flooded with tears; from her parted lips came a single gasp. Then slowly she lifted her drawn face and stared far beyond us. The hurt went out of her eyes and her mouth.

We left her that way.

I don't know what became of her.

### *Bombers for the Philippines*

In far-off Hawaii or, more properly, Oahu, lights blinked up in a dozen homes long before the sun pushed dawn across the soft Pacific night. These were officers' quarters. And in each of those homes was being reenacted the drama as old as man and his armies . . . Farewell.

There were other lights, too. Many of them. Down on the hangar line. Huge black birds sat heavily along the line and appeared far too permanent to move at all.

But they did. One by one they bellowed into life and beat the air back of their whirring screws into whipping cyclones. And one by one they lifted ponderously but surely into the night, found their bearings and were gone.

For the first time in its history, our government was ferrying giant bombers west of Hawaii to reinforce the Philippines.

First to Midway. Then to Wake. This was the route in use by the transpacific clippers. But that's as far as the bombers followed the conventional trail. They struck south after that.

Then came a day in September when the messages from Darwin, Australia, said: "Five B-17's arrived here at . . ." They'd come down by way of Port Moresby, a barely adequate airdrome in the tree-stunted hills of Papua. Succeeding messages told that more of the big four-engined ships had successfully completed that much of the dangerous journey.

Then one day a flight of them lifted from Darwin's red-dusted airfield and flew into the north. All morning and the early part of

the afternoon we followed them by radio contact established by the Navy radio station at Cavite. To give them further assistance, the Pan American Airways' homing radio station on San Pedro Makati Road kept its beam in operation. At the proper time according to our estimates, Captain Sprague raced his pursuit airplane across Manila Bay toward Corregidor to guide them into Clark Field. A typical typhoon had developed off Luzon. Rapidly it grew.

Anxiously we waited. Even Corregidor disappeared from sight.

There was no further sign. The tropical downpour had screened them thoroughly, we learned later. But with unerring navigation the big ships had drawn a bead on Manila Bay, then followed the railroad to Clark. One after another they settled down on this completely unfamiliar field, now obscured by a hangar-high ceiling and still falling rain. The last one in, unable to judge properly through the mist, overshot somewhat and clipped wings with another. It was the only mishap of that type they had experienced, and the only one they were to experience before all thirty-five of the huge Boeings were in at Clark during the immediate prewar period. They'd had other mishaps and experiences plenty. The favorite was to crack their great weight through the surface of the earthen runways of the South Pacific airdromes, which never had been designed for such huge airplanes. Shovels and snorting tractors were the order of the day.

The commander, Colonel Eugene L. Eubank, was forced to cool his heels in Darwin for some time while we endeavored to ferry an engine down to him. He was impatient. For him, as for us, it was necessary to adjust to the reality that no longer was the world at our fingertips. We fought for what we got in this country. The job alone of ferrying the engine was no small one in those days. It took a short-range aircraft compelled to make refueling stops at Tarakan and Balik Papan in Borneo, Kendari in Celebes, and Koepang on Timor. And this all caused no end of detailed activity on the part of my staff. The Netherlands East Indies was not our ally yet. The Dutch were our potential allies, but United States pilots must needs be equipped with passports properly "chopped" for these places. Each gun position all the way down had to have proper warning from Bandoeng not to fire on the stranger from

the north. Dr. Huender, my friend of the *Tjinegara* days, was of immeasurable help during those pioneer times. Australian points likewise had to be notified through the British Consul General's office in Manila. Otherwise Darwin antiaircraft defenses might have a go at them. After all, these countries had been at war for nearly two years. They weren't fooling.

Gone forever were the fine hangars, hard-surface aprons, and concrete runways of Hawaii. This was airplaning in the rough. And for most of the boys who came over on that first armada it was to be—rougher and rougher. The days of Hollywooding it were over.

There were some tops in the lot: Major Emmett ("Rosie") O'Donnell, Captain Colin Kelly . . .

Great credit is due to the late Captain Floyd Pell for his excellent liaison work in Darwin. He went to Darwin early for this work. He often returned to Darwin on other work. He died over Darwin—hopelessly but unhesitatingly trying to defend it against an overwhelming flood of enemy planes sweeping in for the surprise attack on February 19.

The arrival of the 19th Bombardment Group at Clark Field during October leavened our spirits like strong drink. They were not enough. Not nearly enough. Colonel George had asked for many groups like that, supported by medium bombers and clouds of fighters as the minimum with which we could hope to meet our powerful enemy-to-be in the north. Even then we had grossly underestimated his strength. The 19th wasted no time in shaking down to business. And while they reorganized themselves at Clark, we were very busy at Nichols erecting newcomer fighter airplanes from the States. More P-40's. Many more.

At last, Washington was making a determined bid for it. Washington wasn't fooling either. It was stripping the nation to try to supply the Philippines. If only we could have recaptured a year of lost time . . .

During September and October we in turn were host to several of our erstwhile hosts of the previous months. Visiting Manila at different times were Major General Playfair, the chief of staff for Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, Major General Hain Terpoorten,

chief of staff for General Berenshot of the Netherlands East Indies Army, and Sir Robert Brooke-Popham himself. General Terpoorten's visit was cut short by the calamitous death of the brilliant General Berenshot in an air crash over Batavia.

*"It's a long lane that has no turning . . ."*

The disquiet on our horizon grew and spread, like some implacable inflammation. Indo-China was a *fait accompli*. Would Thailand be next? The vociferous Philippine journalist, Carlos Romulo, who had examined the Japanese at home and the Japanese in other people's homes, said Yes. Definitely. And then, Malaya. And the N.E.I. And . . . And . . .

But our own immediate horizons were uneasy, too.

The first intimation I had that all was not well in our bailiwick came when the General told me one day that he had received a very long-distance telephone call. From America. He was not specific, and so far as his outward appearance was concerned, and his usual preoccupation with the things that habitually formed the centers of our conversations during the late-afternoon walks around and beyond Fort McKinley, this call might have been simply a good-will greeting. But it hadn't been. Of this I was sure a day or so later when I knew that he had placed return calls to America. Something was amiss; something that very much concerned him personally.

Our walks were shorter now. And several times we had to cancel them altogether. It was not the telephone calls. The General had suffered a serious fall. The casting on his swivel chair in the headquarters office had fractured and let this bulky man strike the concrete floor heavily on his back: the same back that had given him many a painful month in earlier days when arthritis had threatened to incapacitate him completely. All the old demons in that back were reawakened. Little beads of sweat would stand on his brow at times. But the fighting spirit of the man defied the pain to do its damnedest.

It was while he was thus grimly squared away for another round

with his old, crippling antagonist that he learned that he was to be replaced as Commanding General of the Far Eastern Air Force.

The General's cup often had been filled with pleasanter stuff than the bitter gall which now was his lot to quaff. But he took it. Took it without a bat of his gray-green eyes. Reverses and General Claggett were no strangers. And at no time during the months of our close association did he ever attempt in even a small way to find a mitigating circumstance in discussing the blows that had come to his wide-opened chin. He'd led with it. He'd followed his convictions, rightly or wrongly. That was all. He'd been a brigadier general once before. And "busted." He took it. Now he was a brigadier general again, and one who'd been accorded one of the outstanding opportunities that could come to any military man in our services.

His poor health unquestionably was one factor that prevented his meeting that opportunity with the fire and dash and good solid belligerency that this old war dog had been expected to deliver.

My mind went back to a certain scene in the cool interior of "No. 1 Victoria." General MacArthur, newly recalled from his retirement to head the United States Army Forces in the Far East, sat behind his richly carved desk, flanked on one side by the banner of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and on the other by the American stars and stripes. Ringed around the opposing walls of the room were all of us from Nielson Field, headed by General Claggett.

"I know your chief," General MacArthur had said in those clipped, incisive phrases of his. "I've known him a long time. And I want to tell you that he has my complete backing, because I have every confidence in him . . ."

As we left USAFFE, General Claggett said to me: "And now that you've seen him and heard him, what do you think of what I consider to be the most brilliant general since General Lee?"

"What I think is not important, sir," I had replied. "But what he thinks of you is important. And if I were you, I'd feel pretty good right now."

He nodded, and as we got into the waiting car he said: "He has a way of making a man want to deliver the best there is in him."

Uncompromisingly loyal to General Claggett, Colonel George felt that he had one greater obligation—that to his country.

"Medically there isn't sufficient evidence of organic trouble to justify his being declared unfit," he said one day after the news had filtered in that a new air chief was on his way. "But I am utterly sure that he never could endure the strain of a war. It's bad enough now, the strain and responsibility and all. But wait until they begin to shoot down our planes and kill our kids, the same ones who depended on us to train them and equip them so they could defend themselves properly. He could take the bombing and the strafing and all that. He's as courageous as any man alive. But it's when they start killing our kids that he'd crack up."

Nevertheless, for me nothing could then, nor can now, detract from my admiration for the fine, unexcusing, ruggedly regular manner in which he prepared to relinquish his command to another, who though younger than himself already had acquired one more star than he carried on his own shoulders.

On October 15 he called me into his office, which at that moment he was preparing to evacuate. He wanted to prepare me for a letter he had written and which was placed on my desk the next day.

It said:

It is with regret that I am relieving you as Aide-de-Camp.

I find it advisable to do so as your duties as G-2 require your entire attention.

I take this opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate your services. Your loyalty and interest displayed in my behalf have been outstanding.

The same day Special Orders No. 17 contained the formal notice.

"I should feel badly if it made any difference," he said in answer to my question. "It's just that—well, you must be in a position to serve the incoming commander with everything you've

got. He'll be needing you as I needed you. His name is"—he paused and blew a smoke ring to the ceiling—"Major General Lewis H. Brereton."

*"New Brooms . . ."*

For days we had been in considerable doubt as to the exact route taken and time of arrival of the new chief. But through pipe lines established with the aid of news-service representatives I had determined that he was not coming by bomber via Australia, as one persistent rumor had it. He was arriving by clipper. At Cavite.

Colonel George had arranged for an escort to intercept the big flying boat in the vicinity of the Polillo Islands and bring it in. But aside from that and the official reporting to General MacArthur, no special functions were planned for us. Besides, we were very much occupied by a most serious problem—oxygen.

It was just another of those million and a half details that the rapidly expanding forces of defense had created. A detail among all those details. But one which by its absence could cripple vital operations. High-altitude fighters and bombers were chained to the dangerous lower levels without full tanks of oxygen for pilots and crews. Even as the P-40's took off from the dusty strips to meet the clipper, Captain Eads and myself had gone to North Manila to investigate an oxygen-making plant. I returned to Nielson in time to see the escort drumming its return route below the threatening thunderheads in the afternoon clouds. We were never again to see so many friendly airplanes over Manila.

Major General Lewis H. Brereton was a square-rigged, stout-hulled believer in action. His body bespoke action. His tongue articulated his demands for it. His eyes looked for it. Clipped and final were his sentences, sweeping were his concepts, and sudden were his decisions. Here was a man who preferred to make his mistakes on the run. He'd make them. He knew it. But he wouldn't make them because he wouldn't do anything. His mistakes would be those of commission. He had a tremendous job. He had no

time in which to do it. He could not use precious time and effort determining all the fine points of tactful approach and diplomatic operation. He was as direct as a machine gun, and he operated with much the same rapidity. He saw his target. He tried to hit it, as quickly, as directly, and as hard as necessary.

"I'm Brereton," he said crisply but without drama as he came into my office and shoved out his hard, tough hand to me. He caught me for one real moment in the direct glance of his brown eyes, and I experienced for the first time the magnetism of his broad grin. "I hear you've been doing some good work here. I hope you'll feel free to pitch right into it just as before and give it all you've got."

This, then, was the new chief.

That evening Colonel George questioned me.

"Shall we keep him?" he asked with a chuckle.

I nodded, then spoke.

"But with your knowledge of this picture and your vision of what's needed I still think it ought to be you. Or, at least, you should be the chief of staff."

"Now you're being silly."

Anyway, it was done. And the new broom was ready to start sweeping . . .

### *New Tangents . . .*

Soon after his coming, General Brereton caused us to be assembled in Colonel George's office. Present were all who had staff assignments, together with members of the Adjutant General's office and those of associated services.

The words we heard were brief enough and highly to the point.

"I can bring you the latest from Washington," said General Brereton. "And the news is not good for timid ears. As you know, negotiations are in progress. But have no fond hopes. The differences between our interests and those of Japan appear to be fundamental—much too fundamental to be repaired by a few weeks of

conferences in Washington. This country must be put on a full war footing. The War Department expects us to do it. The people of the United States expect us to do it. Every man here will have to give his utmost. I'm sure we will do it."

His remarks were followed by some by his Chief of Staff, who informed us in loud tones that some changes were to be made. And if they didn't bring desired results further changes would follow the first ones.

Shortly thereafter it was announced that headquarters would be on a "G" rather than an "S" basis.

Automatically I lost my job.

A junior officer may not head the section of a general staff headquarters. Special Orders No. 24, November 6, named me Assistant to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Air Force, USAFFE.

The new G-2 was Major Charles H. Caldwell, who had accompanied General Brereton to Manila. He came into my office. The smile on his long face was friendly enough. In words of the same kind he told me that General Brereton had taken the action only pending such time as it might be possible to secure an adequate promotion for me. As proof he indicated that the orders showed him as "Acting" Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2. Somebody had been doing a good job of press-agenting for me. Major Caldwell was the second of the newcomers to speak of "good work" in my office. Captain Llewellyn, the good-natured blond giant who was aide to General Brereton, was the third. I strongly suspected Colonel George. He believed in me. He was taking care of his own.

Major Caldwell also was named G-3, or Operations Officer. He would be a very much occupied gentleman with one job or the other; I was not surprised that he expressed not only willingness but desire that I should carry on exactly as before, and that he proposed to interfere in no way whatever, throughout our relations. Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Caldwell was as good as his word.

Major Caldwell's assistant in the G-3 office was handsome dark-haired slender Captain Horace Greely, lately of the Chungking office of our Military Attaché organization.

What was to be Colonel George's job, I asked him.

"What do you think?" he asked, his eyes giving me no hint.

"Commander of the Interceptor Command," I guessed quickly. But he checked my mounting enthusiasm with a shake of his head.

"No, I am G-4."

"You mean . . ."

"I mean G-4, and in case you are about to do a nose dive I'll tell you that I understand that it is to be temporary. It also is very logical. You know that I have a finger pretty closely on all our supply problems and airfield construction. Being G-4 will give me the authority I need to deal with all of them. My assistant will be Major K. J. Gregg."

General Brereton no doubt had brought Colonel Brady over with him for the express purpose of serving as his Chief of Staff. From thousands of miles away he had no means of knowing our picture intimately; he hardly could know that in Colonel George he had a natural chief of immeasurable worth to him: an imaginative, clear-seeing, highly energetic and thoroughly beloved leader, whom every man jack of us at Headquarters respected and looked upon as our mentor and adviser. The disastrous results of the first few months of the war probably would not have been materially altered had Colonel George been retained as first adviser and staff administrator to General Brereton; but certainly some things would have been different. Still, it is certain that had he been named Chief of Staff he automatically would have been a member of the Brereton evacuation party on the day before Christmas. He would not have been with us on Bataan Peninsula. It would also seem that somewhere in the plan of things the All-Wise One so ordered it to ensure his being available to take care of us, to teach us to protect ourselves, to hold up our spirits by main strength and determination, and to imbue us with the will to do.

Captain John S. Spigler was named Acting G-1. Captain Nichols—"Nick"—had been relieved of his Personnel Section duties in order to devote his full time to General Claggett as flying aide.

My old chief, General Claggett, now was announced as Commander of the Fifth Interceptor Command. Colonel Eubank was named Commander of the Fifth Bomber Command, and Colonel Lawrence Churchill was named as head of the Air Service Com-

mand with Lieutenant Colonel Maitland, the displaced chief of Clark Field, as his assistant. Lefty Eads was retained as General Brereton's Engineer Officer, Lieutenant Lazarini as his Chemical Warfare Officer, and Lieutenant Whitfield as his Weather Officer. Jovial, conversational Major MacMurray continued with his duties as Finance Officer, and Captain Loetzel was Major Gregg's assistant. Captain John Mamerow was retained as Adjutant General, and Captain Laurence A. Sensmeier was his assistant. Major Lamb was Signal Officer.

Again Major Caldwell approached me regarding the matter of a promotion that I might be named as being fully in charge of my section again. But I made no further attempts to comply with General Brereton's suggestion that I provide him with information as to what steps should be taken to secure the promotion.

### *Southward Base*

By September the need for information regarding the island continent to the south of us had become acute. It was apparent to those whose responsibilities included attempting to secure the future against the aggressor that we must establish some base of supply and operation remote from these places which were within easy attacking distance by the Japanese. We could be bombed from the north. We could be throttled completely from the east by means of the strategic islands which we had so generously granted to Japan, and which she had been so effectively consolidating during our years of ingenuous treaty observance. Should Malaya and Singapore be involved, and the flame spread to N.E.I., then truly our position in the Philippines would be untenable. All through September we had been preparing special maps designed to assist pilots of fighter airplanes in making a run from Darwin, Australia, to Nichols Field, via Koepang, Kendari, Sandakan, Balik Papan, Tarakan, Del Monte on Mindanao, and Santa Barbara on Panay.

What did Australia have to offer as a possible base? Our information on her airdromes, her industrial facilities, expansion

possibilities, labor supply, economic situation, and political and social temper was incomplete and uncertain. To effect the necessary political and military contacts, to conduct desirable surveys and effect arrangements for receiving, erecting, and dispatching these anticipated supplies of pursuit aircraft, as well as for servicing and dispatching bombers which might be ferried from Hawaii, was an indicated task of vitally necessary accomplishment. General Sutherland had summoned Colonel George and indicated that he should prepare to act as General MacArthur's representative. So nearly ready was he to comply that I had already had his passport "chopped" for Dutch intermediate stops and Australian points. Then it became increasingly apparent that we could ill spare him. Captain Floyd Pell was sent during September to make the preliminary arrangements for the bombers, but the necessity for performing the rest of the huge task remained.

General Brereton had been installed as the new Air Chief only a few weeks when it became obvious that the matter could not be postponed longer without risking highly undesirable complications and exposing us to the possibility of having no supply route should our direct transpacific connections with Hawaii be suddenly interrupted—as it appeared grimly and increasingly that they would be. (Twice during October we had been notified of the rapidity with which relations were deteriorating and of the need for all haste in preparation.) By the end of October, when it was decided that I should move over to No. 7 Military Plaza, it had also been decided that, together with General Brereton and a small picked party, I should move considerably farther—to Australia.

My task was outlined very briefly. I was to accompany the party to make a social, military, and economic survey of Australia. The outline was brief enough. But there was nothing abbreviated about the task. In the gentle days of a few years previously, I would have suggested, with a completely clear conscience, that a leave of absence for six months or a year was necessary for doing the job right.

"It's a very big job and we shall have very little time to do it, but that's what I want from you," said General Brereton crisply.

Twice the terrific pressure of developments, expansions, the

need for decisions, for reconsiderations, for attentions of all kinds demanded that General Brereton postpone our departure.

The night of November 15, however, found Captain Eads and myself motoring up through Pampanga to Clark Field. At exactly 3:00 A.M. the four motors of the huge Flying Fortress bellowed into full throttle, flinging the dust of Clark Field toward the distant floodlights illuminated for our solitary departure. Colonel Eubank was our pilot. General Brereton, Major Caldwell, and Captain Llewellyn were forward. Lefty Eads was curled up in the radio compartment amidships, and I was stretched out on the distressingly narrow deck walk extending from the fuselage door to the radio room. It was only a foot wide at its narrowest part, but I learned to sleep on it as though it had been an air-cushioned double bed.

We raised Darwin in midafternoon, but went on to a field lower down as it was reported that the Darwin strips would not support our tremendous wheel loads with safety. Not a minute was wasted. We flew back to Darwin in Hudson bombers and, messing with the jovial R.A.A.F. officers there, we engaged upon long technical discussions.

Early the next morning we rejoined our big 17 and roared away into the northeast, for Port Moresby in Papua. Here a curious service crew met our ship as we came to rest and debouched in the fierce heat. They were both white and fuzzy-wuzzy. Round-faced, friendly, these sons of Papua were distinguished by the great mop of fuzzy hair which stood out in every direction from their heads. But the most amazing feature of this amazing coiffure was the brick-red coloring that characterized the surface, whereas the length of the hair shaft was black.

That night we went to sleep to the weird calls and howls of the natives high up in the hills. Those sounds were not reassuring to us; but to the experienced officials they signified that all was well. It was when sudden silence descended over the hills that the officials became uneasy and tightened their belts for a spot of trouble.

The big ship and its now very familiar interior swallowed us up at daybreak and roared down a runway lined by the tents of the garrison and by ranks of fifty-gallon fuel drums. War had not

come to us closely yet. Our fuel supplies still could remain in the open. The 17 shook the sleep out of herself and immediately thrust her nose upward. From the rolling knoblike hills with their drought-burned baldheadedness, the country suddenly began to climb toward us. The engines roared defiance and lifted us higher—higher.

Still we nosed upward. The temperature was in inverse order. I began to feel the first fuzziness of the rapid climb and of lean oxygen. My interest in a faint trail that zigzagged through the mottled carpet below and occasionally widened to receive a straggling collection of native straw huts began to wane. Had I known what a critical part this barely discernible trail was destined to play in the fortunes of war almost a year later, I would have fought the brain fatigue and studied it all the way. This was the Owen Stanley Track along whose hellish lengths both white man and yellow were to bury their bones in the stinking miasmic jungle; and along there, too, the bushy-haired Papuans were to prove completely worthy of the appellation the Australians gave them because of their devotion in carrying the wounded back impossible distances to the base hospitals: "The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels of the Owen Stanley Track."

The poem was to go like this:

Many a mother in Australia, when the busy day is done,  
Sends a prayer to the Almighty for the keeping of her son;  
Asking that an Angel guide him, and to bring him safely back—  
Now we see those prayers answered, on the Owen Stanley Track.

Tho' they haven't any halos, only holes slashed through the ear,  
And their faces marked with tattoos and with scratch pins in their  
hair,  
Bringing back the badly wounded, just as steady as a hearse,  
Using leaves to keep the rain off, and as gently as a nurse;  
Slow and careful in bad places on the awful mountain track,  
And the look upon their faces makes us think that Christ was black.  
Not a move to hurt the carried, as they treat him like a saint,  
It's a picture worth recording, that an artist's yet to paint.

Many a lad will see his mother, and the husbands wee 'uns and wives,  
Just because the Fuzzy Wuzzies carried them to save their lives  
From a mortar or machine-gun fire or a chance surprise attack  
To safety and the care of doctors at the bottom of the track.

May the mothers in Australia, when they offer up a prayer,  
Mention these impromptu angels with the fuzzy-wuzzy hair.\*

Still we climbed—until with one final, prolonged lift we drummed heavily along the true backbone of the furiously tumbled country. This, then, was “The Gap” of the famous-to-be Owen Stanley Range. Men were to lift their jungle-beaten bodies over this spirit-crushing elevation not once, but several times in the deadly seesaw of war to come. Every pound of food, every ton of dead-weight munitions was to be lifted likewise—on the backs of men, or slung on poles supported by stumbling but ever cheerful Fuzzy Wuzzies—until relieved in large measure by the Troop Transport Service. In its inception in this particular section, another chap was destined to hew the beginnings out of sheer nothingness. He was Lieutenant Wade Hampton, flying aide of General Brereton, who at the time of our trip was still in Manila.

Now we played tag with lower clouds and, as rapidly as the still boisterous earth would let us, slipped down to more comfortable flying levels. Presently we swung low over a peace-settled tropical village lapped by brilliant blue seas. Lae . . . Beyond was Salamaua. Yes, peaceful now, but peace was not to be theirs. The bellow of bombs and the rip of machine guns would shatter them for many months. It was noon when we circled out of range of a sulphurous volcano and let down on the airfield at Rabaul in the New Britain group.

Let down is correct.

The big ship took the first lengths easily enough. But Colonel Eubank had not seen the almost microscopic field safe-limit markings, and as we wheeled to taxi into a cleared position, the heavy 17 suddenly stumbled, half recovered—then thudded to a bone-jarring stop. We had let through the top surface of brittle, volcanic ash and were all but flat on our belly. Anxiously Colonel

\* Courtesy Brisbane *Courier-Mail*, Oct. 31, 1942.

Eubank and his copilot inspected the landing gear, while R.A.A.F. ground personnel set about in a knowing fashion to dig us out.

"Can't recommend it as a steady diet for landing gear," announced the Colonel finally. "But apparently she's in good order. Yank her out." Snorting caterpillar tractors did the job in excellent time, aided and abetted by some fifty hands shoving on every safe surface. Suspicious because of their businesslike handling of the situation, I inquired . . . Oh, yes. These bloody giants didn't visit Rabaul on their way from Wake to Port Moresby on the ferry route unless they had to; but when they did—well, "it was best to have a bloody shovel and a bloody tractor or two bloody well ready!" It was obvious why General Brereton wanted to have a first-hand look at this emergency midway station if the route were to be maintained.

We later inspected the drome and photographed it. The crank of my motion picture camera had slipped unnoticed from its clip on the field. Automatically this ended further activities of this type for the duration of the trip. I sincerely hope that since then it may further have served its country by puncturing the tire of some hapless Japanese bomber destined to use this same field months later when the Nipponese carried Rabaul, and from there initiated all too many operations against New Guinea and the Solomons. Flying Fortresses, on scores of days and nights, were to follow the route our big machine traversed that morning, in ceaseless attacks on shipping and naval concentrations, rendezvousing in the harbor for smashes against the Marines on Guadalcanal.

But all this was hidden from us as we retraversed the Owen Stanley late that afternoon and settled once more at the Port Moresby airdrome. Previously we had arrived and departed at times which made photography impossible, much to the disgust of those of us who desired camera records of the eye-blinking ingenuousness of the Papuan women in the display of their superbly developed breasts, sometimes marred (in our western opinion) by tattooed embellishments designed to improve Nature's generous handiwork in catching the roving male eye. This time, we had arrived in time. It was then that I made the disconcerting discovery that my camera was crankless. Our willing dusky subjects posed

fruitlessly; but they never knew it. I went through the motions, anyway. What the eye could not see, the maidenly heart could not grieve—or something like that.

Again the predawn arousal by that callous orderly and his infernal eye-smashing electric light. Woozy-eyed, we snatched catnaps as the 17 crossed again the cobalt depths of the Coral Sea and pointed for Townsville.

It was at this northern outpost in Queensland that we anticipated originally establishing the erection point for pursuit—or as we later were to style them in common with our allies—fighter aircraft. General Brereton held a brief meeting. He covered the accomplishments so far and reoutlined what he expected from each man. To Lefty fell the heaviest burden—that of surveying and recommending, then and there, on paper, what he considered to be necessary in plant and equipment to provide us with a great base. We later were to know that Townsville's location, so close to the fighting fronts, was not conducive to the establishment of the big base we envisioned at that time.

Off again on our highly geared trip, we transplaned at Brisbane. It was not thought wise to take the big 17 to Melbourne. We were the first Flying Fortress to land at Brisbane. Members of the R.A.A.F. command there had been alert since daybreak for our arrival, and were much disappointed hours before our coming when a B-18 instead of a four-engined giant came in. Captain Pell had preceded us. Now we split, half of us going in the 18, and the rest in a Hudson. Melbourne was cold, wet, and cheerless when we arrived. It so happened that my arrivals at this truly splendid southern city inevitably were so characterized, meteorologically speaking. Still, there was no indication in the mist-filled skies this time that death was to reach for us out of the murk, on the unforgettable occasion of another landing months later.

Melbourne. For me a fury of appointments, interviews, and prolonged sessions at the typewriter. From Victoria Barracks on St. Kilda Road—which was to become so familiar to me—to the University of Melbourne, where I went to confer with the internationally known economist Professor Douglas Copland, I rushed about in a time-squeezed endeavor to achieve my assignment. I saw

little of the others. They were quite as busy as I was, but my style was somewhat cramped by the chills that the damp cold of a late Melbourne spring sent into my tropically softened bones, which made me bundle into bed immediately after dinner every night to remain warm. My exertions with the portable typewriter aided no little in accomplishing this.

I made the acquaintance of Colonel Van S. Merle-Smith of our military attaché staff, who was then, as later, of immeasurable assistance to me as I sought to fulfill General Brereton's directive; I was to benefit many times subsequently from his fine, analytical brain and his generously helpful nature. Then we were off to the north again.

What we had learned was both reassuring and disconcerting. There was no doubt but, in the vital fundamental, Australia and Australians could be relied upon unconditionally in the event of a joint action. We were welcome. Many openly and frankly stated their hopes that we would not be long in coming. Anything they had would be ours. Naturally an extensive expedition of Americans would give rise to many problems of accommodation, supply, administration, and operation. There would be delicate political angles. The new Labor government headed by Prime Minister John Curtin had only just displaced the Menzies organization. The rights and rules of labor were weighty, sensitive. But at this time, when our primary mission was to get on with the establishment of a base and a ferry route across northern Australia, these would not loom so greatly as later, when, and if, our occupations were to include every main center and extend far into the vast hinterland. Still, these things could, and would be adjusted.

Certain other facts were less flexible—or completely unalterable. Australia had a total population roughly equal to that of New York City. And from a given total of population only a certain fraction can be converted into fighting material. Other fractions must maintain essential home services, and the remainder, directly or indirectly, contribute to the industrial war effort. Australia already had put two years of war behind her. She had lifted herself by her bootstraps. Many Americans, in ignorance as definite as it was in poor taste, boasted loudly of our superior status industrially

(and, alas, in nearly every other regard); but they failed entirely to consider the point that in proportion to population and the time involved Australia had developed at a pace that made ours sluggish in comparison.

Australia needed us.

But we were to need her as much.

These things we considered on the long exhausting flight back north. Again we stopped at Brisbane and Port Moresby. Then, skirting the seemingly endless reaches of the New Guinea coast, we traced a proposed route of bomber ferrying that would eliminate the Darwin hop; from Port Moresby to Clark Field direct. Over the wild heart of this huge island, much of it buried under unexplored jungle depths veined by steaming murky rivers where no white man had ventured, we listened with grim reassurance to the tireless roar of our four tenacious engines and noted with constantly renewing satisfaction the undiminished blur of the arching air screws. Twenty-seven hundred and sixty-five miles; and fourteen endless hours later we settled down beyond towering Mount Arayat and bounced to the impact of the Clark Field runway under our wheels.

There was a reception committee. They'd anticipated General Brereton's arrival from our radio contact. But the radio gave no hint of General Brereton's frame of mind.

And it definitely was not cordial.

From his vantage point as we came over the field he had seen that which displeased him thoroughly. He was not one to conceal his displeasures when they concerned vital military matters. He hit ground talking.

"Gentlemen," he said crisply, his eyes snapping. "I have just seen this field from the air. Fortunately for you and for all who depend upon us, I was not leading in a hostile bombing fleet. If I had been, I could have blasted the entire heavy bombardment strength of the Philippines off the map in one smash."

He stopped and peered sharply at one face, then another around the surprised circle.

"Do you call that dispersal?" he demanded, sweeping his arm in an arc around the field where B-17's stood in various groups—

most of them smartly lined up, or otherwise in cozy groups forming perfect bombing and strafing targets. Packed even more closely were fighters.

"It's wrong. Completely wrong. And wrong practices will have no place in the functioning of this field—or any other field under this command. You will rectify this condition at once. And you'll never permit it to occur again . . . Do we understand each other, gentlemen?"

It appeared that they did.

December Eighth was less than two weeks away . . .

## *Rising Storm*

We were hardly more than back when General Brereton called an urgent meeting. I was not present, having been sent to USAFFE on a mission. When I returned, Colonel George came into my office. His face was unsmiling. His eyes were troubled. His words were uttered quietly, tightly.

"While you were gone, General Brereton gave us official notice that from this hour henceforth every man in this command will consider himself upon an alerted status. Every department concerned in the warning and defense operations will be put on a twenty-four-hour basis. We are on a war footing as from this hour."

I stared into his grim face. Within me there was a sudden collision of emotions, a wave of panic—we were so unready, so vulnerable—and a surge of anticipation, as the wings of great danger beat invisibly against the air.

"Word has been received from Washington. Here."

He thrust a message into my hand. It was simple and unadorned by dramatic phrases or patriotic appeal. Its very plainness was as eloquent as it was uncompromising.

The complete breakdown of the negotiations which had been in progress between our government and Tokyo's pinch hitters, headed by the astute Kurusu, was anticipated momentarily. The crisis might occur at any hour. All military, naval, and air

installations of the United States, wherever they existed, were to take all such steps immediately as would ensure them against surprise, and to be prepared in every way to defend the integrity of the country.

"Japan may make some kind of overt move at any 'time,'" the Colonel said quietly. "It may be an amphibious expedition against us, against Malaya—or any other place within striking distance."

So it had come to this . . .

The great steeds of the Apocalypse were striking red fire from the frenzied stamping of their hoofs . . .

Coincidentally with our return from Australia, an order had come for Air Corps personnel, with the exception of General Brereton and his immediate family, then residing on Military Plaza, to remove at once to Fort McKinley. Our old quarters would be taken by personnel on duty at USAFFE and Fort Santiago. Accordingly, following an exhausting day at Nielson we four, who had styled ourselves "The Four Untwitchables," repaired to Military Plaza and forthwith deprived ourselves of our home. I had lasted one month at No. 7.

The self-applied appellation of our quaternity requires some explanation. During the course of our never-ceasing fight to build up our respective sections—and that of the Colonel to build them all—it was inevitable that every one of us at one time or another, or repeatedly, depending upon the personality factors involved, should experience the energy drains, rebuffs, and static phases when discouragement would evince itself in outward signs of depression, irritability, or nervousness. There is no reference in medical literature to a condition of mild neurosis in which the patient is said to be "twitched." But it was real to us. It had its origin in an unfortunate officer in our organization who made the mistake of "sounding off" not wisely and too well—and too often—regarding his abilities, his importance, and his downright indispensability. Having thus invited responsibilities, he got them. Probably a few more than he could handle. But he was game. He also was a glutton for punishment, because his unhappy boastings continued. Eventually, though, the strain of his work asserted it-

self in the form of a facial tic which became more pronounced as the hectic days and nights raced on.

"He's—he's—*twitched!* That's what he is," declared Colonel George one day. "And that's what'll happen to you if you let this job get you down. Remember, now. They can't twitch us."

"Yes," agreed Bud Sprague, "we're untwitchable."

"The Four Untwitchables!" barked Colonel George triumphantly. "That's who we are!"

And so it was. But there were many times in the days to come when all the support we could give one another was needed to maintain that "untwitched" status. The term became something of a classic.

We arrived at Fort McKinley, hungry and utterly weary. We dumped our gear on the floor of Quarters Number 43, adjacent to the spacious quarters of the post commander. We slept amid our own litter. We never were destined to emerge completely from that unsettled state of things. Time was rushing the world to the cataclysm.

Fort McKinley was not the same place as when General Claggett and I had roamed its busy confines—and beyond—even a month previously. Already troops were out on "maneuvers." These had followed the most extensive combined ground and Air Force games we had so far held in the Islands—an occasion upon which General MacArthur expressed warm praise of the efforts of General Wainwright and his staff for the promising show of energy and coordination displayed by the Philippine Division officered by American veterans and reserve men from the States. Later, in a reorganization, General M. S. Lough would command the Philippine Division, while General Wainwright would command the North Luzon Force. The South Luzon assignment would go to General G. M. Parker, my acquaintance of U.S.A.T. *Washington* days.

If war were so close, how did we stack up in the Air Force?

*Inventory*

As early as July, Lefty Eads had made it clear that temporary abandonment by Operations of Nichols Field was necessary if the construction of the second runway and proper drainage of the first one, together with some lengthening, were to be accomplished. Accordingly, the entire 4th Composite Group less the 17th Pursuit Squadron was moved to Clark Field. The move, incidentally, threw very interesting light on the rather unhappy state of our transport and clearly indicated the need for better coordination throughout. The 17th Pursuit Squadron was sent to Iba for gunnery practice. And as a consequence of this, two serious problems, which were to have a profound effect during later events, at once revealed themselves to the youthful squadron commander Lieutenant Boyd ("Buzz") Wagner and to his superiors in rank: (1) deficiencies of supply, (2) the malfunctioning of fighter craft guns. The former was due to many causes, some of them remediable, and some of them hangovers from the old peacetime laissez-faire policy. Lieutenant Wagner's official communication on the matter achieved noble proportions with repercussions in the highest quarters. The malfunctioning of guns sprang from two principal evils, both of them being—carelessness. In one instance it was carelessness in manufacture and inspection in the States, and in the other, carelessness in maintenance in the Islands. This hydra-headed monster alone was to all but whip us to our knees.

During this same month we had received a sufficient number of P-40B type aircraft completely to reequip one squadron. The others still retained their P-35's. The P-26's thus released were to be assigned to the Philippine Army Air Corps, as were some of our B-10 type bombers. Because additional room at Clark Field was required for the anticipated heavy bombers, the 3rd Pursuit Squadron was sent to Iba for gunnery work, displacing the 17th. There was no place left for the 17th but the still uncompleted Nichols Field. The chaotic condition of this field was responsible to a large degree for the high accident rate experienced by this squadron. In October the 24th Pursuit Group was activated at

Clark Field. It consisted of the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, 3rd Pursuit Squadron, 17th Pursuit Squadron, and 20th Pursuit Squadron. The remaining units of the old composite group, including the 2nd Observation Squadron and 28th Bombardment (medium) Squadron, remained with it.

While we were absent in Australia, the 21st and 34th pursuit squadrons belonging to the 35th Pursuit Group had arrived from the States. Pending the arrival of the rest of the group, these squadrons were attached to the 24th.

On December 1st our fighter organization was as follows:

- a. Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, 24th Pursuit Group, Clark Field, commanded by Lieutenant W. D. (Bennie "Put Put") Putnam.
- b. 3rd Pursuit Squadron, Iba, commanded by Lieutenant H. G. Thorne, equipped with P-40E's.
- c. 17th Pursuit Squadron at Nichols Field, commanded by First Lieutenant Boyd D. Wagner, equipped with P-40E's.
- d. 20th Pursuit Squadron at Clark Field, commanded by First Lieutenant J. H. Moore, equipped with P-40B's.
- e. 21st Pursuit Squadron at Del Carmen, commanded by First Lieutenant Sam Marrett, equipped with P-35's.
- f. 34th Pursuit Squadron at Nichols Field, commanded by First Lieutenant W. E. ("Ed") Dyess, partially equipped with P-40E's.

In addition to these fighter planes, the obsolete P-26's had been organized into one squadron at Zablan Field, later moved to Batangas Field, Batangas. Located here, too, were one depot service and one trainer squadron. A bombardment squadron of B-10's was being formed, with its base at Cabanatuan. One observation squadron was in Cebu.

At Clark Field, in addition to the 4th composite group units, there were a tow-target detachment and units of the 19th and 27th bomb groups (heavy).

We had no dive bombers. At best we had a few old A-27's which might be used for this purpose. But repairs and replacements for these ships had been practically impossible to obtain

ever since April. Every so often it was necessary to decommission one in order to secure necessary replacement parts for the continued functioning of the others. However, we had anxiously traced the reported progress of a vessel upon which at least fifty of the A-24 types suitable for strafing and dive bombing were en route. It would be a race to see which would arrive first—the A-24's or the Japanese. The Japanese won. Just a few days off our coast this vessel with its all-important and vitally needed cargo was diverted by radio orders to Australia. Perhaps it was just as well, although we were unaware of it then; for these imperatively required aircraft arrived in Australia without a single solenoid included in the equipment for firing the guns—pure sabotage; whether by diligent foreign agents or by slipshod Americans, the result was the same.

We were becoming well supplied with auxiliary troops. Likewise, equipment, without which we had struggled along for so many months, was arriving in quantities on every ship. However, one acute shortage persisted from the very first—and this in the military service of a nation which led the world in the development and production of radios. There never was anything approaching an adequate supply of vitally needed Signal Corps equipment, and had it not been for the unbelievable resourcefulness and ingenuity of Signal Corps personnel under the inspired leadership of General Spencer B. Akin, assisted brilliantly by such as Lieutenant Colonel Joe Sherr (whose nimble wit and never failing smile were to see us through many a crisis), Major Lamb, and Captain L. A. Mason, we indeed should have been in a deplorable plight.

Included in our heavy signal equipment was one radio type SCR 297, trailer-housed transmitter and receiver, on duty at Nielson Field. This linked us into an operations control net of the few major airfields on Luzon. In addition, we had established one teletype circuit making Nielson, Nichols, and Clark. A third alternate was the civil telephone system. Arrangements had been completed with the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company under Mr. (later Colonel) Stevenot, for the emergency use of a trunk circuit through existing exchanges from Clark to Nielson. The plotting board was at Clark Field. Thus, telephoned reports com-

ing to Air Warning service at Nielson were relayed to the plotting board at Clark; the delay, while serious, was considered not too great for interception practice.

By dint of great effort, one radio direction finder (radar) set had been installed at Iba; one was in the process of installation sixty miles west of Aparri; and a third was en route to Legaspi for installation.

The pulsing light of the radar screen at Iba hardly had been put into operation before sinister recordings displayed themselves to the amazed eyes of the operators. On the morning of December 3rd Colonel George told me of this.

"It's almost here," he said quietly. "Last night the r.d.f. set at Iba showed tracks off the Luzon coast."

"You mean . . ."

"Exactly. Those were Japanese aircraft!"

His words left me stunned.

"They didn't come in," continued Colonel George. "They just made some kind of a survey out there off the coast. It's my guess they simply were getting their range data established—possibly a rendezvous point from Formosa."

At that moment the telephone rang. It was a Clark Field call. The Colonel's face had been serious before. Whatever he heard increased the grimness of his features. He hung up.

"That does it," he said shortly. "Clark Field reports an unidentified aircraft very high over Clark this morning, just before dawn. It was there yesterday morning at the same time. I will lay any odds that this one is cooperating with the units off the Iba station. I am sure they must have been off our coast yesterday also. The r.d.f. must have missed them."

Together we studied the map.

"They've got all they need now. The next time they won't play. They'll come in without knocking."

Colonel George left immediately to report his data and his suspicions to higher headquarters. When he returned, it was with mingled anger and disgust that he declared:

"Can you believe it! I have had the greatest difficulty convincing some of the lesser ones among our people that these tracks indicate

hostile air activity. They say it's some unknown, commercial or private stuff."

Generals MacArthur and Sutherland accepted his estimate, however, and interception attempts were ordered.

He dropped into his chair dejectedly.

"Here we are, with the Japs actually lining their guns up to sight on us, and we still talk about the supplies and equipment we are going to receive between now and March first. You remember, originally, we were told we must be ready for possible hostilities on March 1, 1942, and more than fifty supply ships are scheduled to arrive in Philippine waters between now and then."

He rose and walked in quick stiff little steps about the room. Then he turned suddenly upon me and said with fierce intensity: "We'll be lucky to receive one more ship of the things we need before the Japs blast our sleepy heads right off our shoulders!"

He went out, slamming the door.

Since November 15, all pursuit squadrons had been fully loaded, armed, and on constant alert twenty-four hours each day, the pilots alert on thirty minutes' notice. Blackout preparations had been rushed. The windows of the Air Warning Service unit were being painted opaque throughout, while those of the top tiers of other units likewise were being blackened.

About midnight of December 3 the telephone shrilled. It was Colonel George calling from Interceptor Command Headquarters where he had gone on night duty immediately after completing a fifteen-hour tour of hectic activity.

"There are more tracks off Iba," he said crisply. "Better arouse Bud Sprague and ask him to come down. We may have a war on our hands before morning."

But we didn't. Nevertheless the mysterious airplane winging the night skies above Clark just before dawn again was reported. Unfortunately for any attempt to identify the lofty stranger, he never came within searchlight range and was gone by dawn. A decision immediately was made to alert all aircraft at Clark for an interception; but the next morning the straining eyes of the operators at Iba were unable to detect a single untoward flicker of

their scanner, while at Clark Field hundreds of watchers stationed for the purpose saw nothing, heard nothing.

What did it mean?

We could not know, but we could guess.

"He's got what he wants!" repeated Colonel George grimly.

No one doubted now that these were hostile aircraft; in fact, we had on one occasion dispatched a Flying Fortress to fly patrol on our side of the international boundary off Luzon while beyond this imaginary line droning bombers with the red-ball symbol of the Rising Sun paced along.

For a prolonged period each grimly took the measure of the other.

Saturday December 6, General Brereton called another staff meeting. His eyes were hard and set. His jaw muscles bunched at the sides of his face. He said but a few words.

War was imminent.

## Prelude

Sunday December 7 dawned fine and clear. We who could, relaxed.

That night the 34th Pursuit Squadron received the last of its P-40E's from the depot. It had not slow-timed all of its new ships yet. Our fighter strength of first-line craft now stood at:

3rd Pursuit Squadron	18 P-40's in commission
17th Pursuit Squadron	18 P-40's in commission
20th Pursuit Squadron	18 P-40's in commission
34th Pursuit Squadron	18 P-40's in commission
21st Pursuit Squadron	18 P-35's in commission

Thus the 24th Pursuit Group had fifty-four P-40E's, eighteen P-40B's, and eighteen P-35's in commission, or a total of ninety reasonably first-line aircraft.

In addition, of course, there were fourteen P-26's (obsolete) at Batangas.

There were eight A-27's listed, but only two would fly off the ground. Some of our observation planes were armed lightly.

At Clark Field thirty-five B-17's were listed, all but two being in commission (one flight of B-17's had been dispatched to Mindanao a few days previously). We had eleven B-18's in flying condition. These were poorly gunned and of very little armor. The B-10's were unequal to combat work unless heavily protected. Cabanatuan Field had three of these.

Night came on over the Philippines. . . .

### *Curtain*

The brittle tocsin of the telephone cut through restless slumber like the scream of a harpy.

Nerves as taut as the telephone wires themselves seemingly are energized by the same shock, and action is automatic. Already I was out of my bunk, my hand shooting out to the bedside chair for my flashlight. Through my alerted mind runs the thought: More tracks off Iba . . . Maybe they've come in, this time.

Quick as had been my arising, Lefty Eads was there before me. He called Colonel George. I was halfway through the sliding door when the Colonel's sudden exclamation arrested me and froze me where I stood.

"Jesus Christ . . ." he barked into the instrument in a queer tight voice, and in the faint light of the concealed closet bulb left on to guide us in these night calls, I saw him stiffen.

Lefty Eads was staring at the Colonel, for we both knew him well enough to realize that, whatever had happened, it was something serious indeed—Colonel George was never given to expletives of that kind.

"All right . . . Thanks, Bud." The Colonel clipped off his words, replaced the receiver, and turned, blinking in the light.

"Japan has commenced hostilities!" he said sharply.

That was all. He moved like a man in a dream as he returned toward his bed. And we, Eads and myself, followed him as though we were seeing him in a dream. Our minds reeled under the impact.

We were stunned into a refusal to accept the Colonel's words or what they portended for us. Then I saw his lips moving again. He was speaking.

"Army radio—Pearl Harbor . . ." he said, staring. He stood beside his bed. He began to pull the bedsheets slowly around him as if embarrassed at his nakedness. But I knew he wasn't. Queer, he wanted to pull that sheet around him like that.

War. . . . Pearl Harbor. . . .

He still pulled that sheet around him. But when was war declared? And what did he mean—Pearl Harbor. He'd have that sheet all pulled off the bed. Surprising that he wanted to go back to bed at all. It seemed to me he should—well, what? I didn't know.

War . . . Pearl Harbor . . .

"*Now it is here!*" said the Colonel, and the fierce intensity of his voice clicked my silly nerves into something like order.

But at that instant he snapped off the light and I heard him drop into bed. Stupidly I moved back to my own bunk and sat on the edge. I caught the luminous blur on my wrist and focused on it.

It was 4:17 A.M. Philippine time, Monday December 8, 1941.

At 4:30 A.M. the phone rang again. Lefty got it. He was wide awake, like the rest of us. It was for me. From the other end of the wire came the voice of Frank Hewlett of the United Press.

"We've got two reports here now," he said. "Of course, you know—"

I assured him we had just received the word. "But that's all we know," I said. "What do you know?"

"Well, one of ours is from Honolulu. Hell's broke loose there all right. There's been a heavy attack on all Army and Navy installations, and it's very bad. Don't know just how bad. The other is from Washington. It just repeats the Honolulu message . . . Then you don't have it official yet?"

I informed him that our source was an Army radio, but that could not be considered official.

Fifteen minutes later Major Diller, chief aide to General MacArthur and head of Press Relations, called. I gave him what I had.

At that time he was in possession of no official word. But he did have it immediately thereafter.

At 5:30 official word was issued from USAFFE that Pearl Harbor had been seriously attacked by Japanese planes and submarines from unknown bases.

The bulletin also gave official framing to the grim message that a state of war existed between the United States of America and the Empire of Japan.

By this time I was dressed. I was about to leave the quarters for Nielson Field when Colonel George leaped out of bed. I was still amazed at his ability to sleep under such duress. I was soon to learn how immeasurably valuable was this characteristic of his—and to become envious of him—in the grim days that now descended upon us.

"You can't fight a war on an empty stomach," he grinned, ramming his hands through his stiffish hair. "Come on, have breakfast with me."

Somehow, now that the terrific tension of anticipation was at an end, even though it terminated in the stunning crash of actual war about our ears, Colonel George seemed possessed of a new inner strength, a lithe aggressiveness, an almost terrifying purposefulness that never was to leave him as long as he lived.

## *The Fatal Eighth*

The terrible stimulant of war had caused the age-old leap in the blood of every man and woman on duty at the Air Force Headquarters. True, this instantaneous hypertension had shot into the far corners of the world. But it was only this tight little corner of the Philippines that drew us and held us fascinated.

Now it took on a new and grim significance. As the car swept swiftly up to the door this morning, the big front entrance seemed suddenly to have achieved a hardness. This place was no longer merely our new headquarters building at Nielson. To me it suddenly became the focal point of vast evil forces generating beyond the horizons but rushing in to us here. Gone forever were those easy days, even though we worked hard and long. Part of the past that whirred out through the night with the ringing of those telephone bells were the easy moments of banter, of minutes wasted in leisurely gossip of little things while we cooled off with a soft drink from the dispenser.

Now soldiers stood in small knots, speaking rapidly. Or they moved quickly and with purpose.

In my office I called my anxious-faced staff of women typists around me.

"We don't know yet what the policy will be," I said. "At least there is no danger right this minute, but I assume the time will come soon when you'll all be dismissed for security reasons. We have no right to expose you to duty at a military target."

There was a chorus of dismay.

"We want to stay . . . It's our war, too. You need us."

I was interrupted by a messenger from Colonel George. I crossed the V-court and entered the Air Warning and Interceptor Command wing.

"It's none of my business really," said Colonel George, fixing me with his dark eyes. "But are you all set with your Objective Folders in case General Brereton calls for them?"

"Yes, sir. Of course we can make them better with every day we work on them, but at least we do have detailed data in complete sets."

"Good. Then be on your toes for a call. There'll be a conference in a few minutes. In the meantime, look at this."

I followed his finger on a report. And as I did so I became aware of a rapid tingling over my scalp. For a moment I stared at him unspeaking while the full import of the report registered.

"Why . . . They might have wiped us out last night!" I exclaimed, feeling hot all over.

"Yes, they might have . . . And they might yet, unless we move fast and hit hard. That's why I wanted to know about the folders."

The report was sickening in its possibilities. At approximately four o'clock this morning, the radio direction finder station at Iba had picked up a large formation of unidentified aircraft approximately seventy-five miles off the coast. The plotting-board chart had shown an unerring red line heading straight for the heart of Corregidor. Then it faded out.

The 3rd Pursuit Squadron had been given the action alert, and in a very short time had risen into the black sky and borne straight for the point of anticipated interception.

But contact had not been made.

And thus the first possible air fight of the war had missed—not because the 3rd had done a faulty job, but because in this initial real-thing game, the radar had been unable to provide sufficient accurate data on the altitude of the hostile armada. This was not a criticism of the equipment; after all, we'd hardly made its acquaintance yet.

But the Plotting Table had indicated a successful interception. That could mean only one thing . . .

The 3rd Pursuit Squadron had struck straight enough for the enemy—but it had passed below the hostile fleet—and hunters and hunted, equally blacked out, had roared past each other on different altitude levels of the night.

"We'd better go now," suggested Colonel George. "They'll be calling the meeting. General Brereton still is at USAFFE."

We went through the big Air Warning Service room with its

huge Plotting Table. A blue haze of smoke hung unmoving over the great horizontal map of the Islands. Ringed round the edge of the spreading flat map, raised from the floor to table height, telephonists and tellers waited—waited for the next move in this grim game played over the map boards of nations.

It would come soon enough . . .

A restless ebb and flow of men surged about in General Brereton's office. Several were officers I had not previously seen. Some were from Clark Field; others, from Nichols. General Brereton was not there. Beside his empty chair, seizing the back of it with white-knuckled fists, was Colonel Brady. The deep scowling cleft separated intense, bloodshot eyes that darted swift, hostile, inclusive glances about the room and out into the corridor. Colonel Eubank was there. He was pacing. His fingers were splayed outward in a characteristic predatory attitude. For a moment my mind traveled far from this war-roiled room. I saw another man, beloved by all Americans and countless million others. How startlingly Colonel Eubank resembled in features, stance, mannerisms, and even speech—the late Will Rogers.

"Sure they're ready," I heard Colonel Eubank say irritably. "They've been ready since before daylight. What're we goin' to do with 'em? That's what I want to know."

"Well, come on, then," snapped the Chief of Staff. "We'll call this meeting to order. The General's still at USAFFE. But we'll have a plan ready for him when he comes."

I gathered from the scattered, disjointed conversation that the B-17 crews had been alerted very early, and that before leaving Clark Field to come here for final instructions, Colonel Eubank had instructed them to be made ready for take-off shortly after daylight. But there had been a question whether they were to go fully bombed up, or travel light, although armed of course, for photo and other reconnaissance work. I gathered, too, that conflicting orders had been issued successively: one to bomb up, and another to unload; one that there would be no take-off, and another that they were to stand to for immediate dispatch.

It was at this juncture that Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell tapped

me on the arm and motioned me to accompany him into the corridor. His voice was tense, yet calm enough.

"Your objective folders of Formosa. . . . I hope to God they're ready!"

"They are."

"Go check 'em over. Be absolutely sure. We're playing for keeps now. And it looks like we'll be dealing out a hand any minute."

As I left, General Brereton came down the corridor in a short swift stride. His face was pale, his jaw hard.

It was with a surge of exultation that I repeated Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell's instructions to my staff. Corporal Roulston's eyes blinked rapidly as his hands played over the combination knobs of the safes. In every respect my feeling was shared by him, by Lieutenant Lou Bell and the others of the group who had worked for many withering weeks and for many exhausting overtime hours to make the best use of the data, which others just as faithful had compiled in Manila and Washington, from information gathered by still other individuals, who had risked their lives—and sometimes paid with them.

There really was no need for further check. We were ready. We had been ready ever since that grim warning of November 27. Each day we'd added something. But even that had been incorporated properly. We were as ready as we would be for a long time to come.

There would be complete misses. Plenty of them. And many would be owing to errors and shortcomings on our part. We knew that. We had no illusions. These folders were not comparable with the exact and elaborate sheets of the R.A.F. and the Luftwaffe, prepared as they had been over a dozen, a score and more of years. We had none of their beautifully calibrated bomb-target maps, indicating best approaches and even bomb release lines for given speeds and altitudes. But we had something complete enough to make this bombing mission a very far cry from the blind stab it would have had to be otherwise. Maybe we could deliver a real hurt, if not a staggering blow, to the enemy at his very point of departure for an invasion action against the Philippines.

Yes, the folders were ready. I turned to go back to the meeting.

But instead I collided at the doorway with Colonel Eubank and one of the Clark Field pilots.

"Have you got those things ready?" Colonel Eubank demanded.

For answer I put a load of them into the waiting arms of the junior officer, while Colonel Eubank strode back toward General Brereton's office.

"Well, what is it to be?" I asked.

The Clark Field officer snorted:

"I don't know. They're still at it."

"An armed photographic and bombing mission!" spoke a voice sharply beside me. It was Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell again. "The 17's are to go up to Formosa and on up north, but no further than the 23rd parallel. They'll hit targets of opportunity and get in all the reconnaissance and camera stuff they can."

"Swell!" I exclaimed.

That was something like it. Hit first, hit hard, and then come back for another load! I was tingling with excitement and anticipation.

But it was all premature.

Something had gone wrong in the meeting.

Lou Bell rushed in, his face a thundercloud. Behind him was the Clark Field pilot. He wanted more folders.

"What's the matter, Lou?" I asked anxiously.

"Ah!" he jerked disgustedly. "It's all off!"

"What's all off?"

"Oh, they're just going to make it an armed photographic reconnaissance . . . Maybe only one airplane."

"No" . . . My voice betrayed the dismay I felt.

"The bombing scheme is out," said the Clark Field officer dispiritedly. "General Brereton has ordered us not to send bombers up until we've got definite photographic targets."

"But," objected Lou Bell, "if we wait for that it may be too late. They may hit us. What're we waiting for—to get our heads knocked off?"

"Well, if this is to be photo only, do you still want the folders?" I asked of the pilot.

"Yes. Then we'll supplement them and be ready."

I loaded him up again. And went back to the meeting. I was just in time to intercept Colonel Eubank's demand from Colonel Brady.

"Well, do I go—or don't I go?"

"You go, Gene—reconnaissance," directed the Chief of Staff.

"All right, then. I'll get him off the ground. We'll stand by to get the others up if necessary."

At this moment Colonel George interjected.

"I hope it doesn't take long, Gene. You know, we've already reported one fleet of heavy stuff headed this way this morning."

"When?"

"Just a little while ago. A large force is supposed to be coming in from Lingayen. They're reported headed this way. Clark knows it."

"Well, we can't be taking off for every alarm, Hal," Colonel Eubank replied. "We've got to have some time for refueling. The planes 've got to be serviced. The crews 've got to eat and rest sometime."

"Yes, that's true. But they can stay up there all day if they have to: they've got that much endurance."

Colonel Eubank waved his hand impatiently and turned away to the telephone. He put through an emergency call to Clark.

Colonel George left the room, his face grim, his eyes staring. It was not the time to intrude upon his intense mental concentration. But I felt a cold pull of uneasiness. I went to the Interceptor Command Headquarters to learn what I could.

The 20th Pursuit Squadron had been ordered off Clark Field to intercept at Rosales, between Clark and Lingayen. As I started back toward my office, the air drummed to motors over Nichols. It was the 17th taking off and drilling for Clark to cover the field in case the hostile bombers eluded the 20th.

The storm clouds of war had gathered with appalling swiftness. And even as they rushed to blot out our sun of clear vision and collected thinking, they were quivering with the lightning that would lash out and strike at any moment.

Were we alert enough? Had we muffed this first plan to hit before being hit? Had we underestimated the aggressiveness and

the implacable determination of these little men? And what about our bombers? They would be caught on the ground!

But no. . . . All bombardment had been ordered off Clark Field at the time the 20th was dispatched.

There was no more time to observe the deadly fascinating game of bid-and-call being played at the Interceptor Command headquarters. Little patches of paper were coming to my section. Some of them were backgrounded on the familiar yellow of the teletype. Others were carboned repeats from the Air Warning filter room. But each told its cryptic story of war's quickening tempo.

. . . Enemy battleships reported off the coast of Ilocos Norte . . . Three Japanese flying boats soaring slowly about the islands of Babuyan and Batan far to the north, between Luzon and Formosa . . . (We'd planned to use Batan as a possible refueling spot for missions against the main island of Japan!) Unidentified ships steaming at high speed off the north coast . . . A single-engined flying boat had crashed in the water off Babuyan, and the crew were hiding in the reedy shallows. They were armed with revolvers and would permit no one to come close . . . (Well, at least that was one down—the first! When would the last one fall?)

At General Brereton's instruction we set up a makeshift situation map in his office directly in front of his desk. As each new message came in, the condensed contents were indicated in the margin, and the indicator line drawn in to the point of occurrence or report. The message then was entered in the G-2 log, and at the same time a quick paraphrase of it telephoned to USAFFE or to Fort McKinley, or both. If Naval operations were concerned, a repeat was made to the Naval operations headquarters in Port Area.

So swift was the rate of acceleration that our modest equipment and restricted staff were threatened with submergence almost at once. Obviously we should require immediate amplification.

And yet, just when our need was mounting in geometric leaps, the order came for the evacuation of all civilian secretaries. It was paralyzing in its sweeping suddenness and effect. But it was thoroughly just. The military had no right to ask these women, willing though they were, to risk their lives by remaining on duty at a

first-rate military target. We had no facilities for defense. We had no shelters . . . Not one!

Protesting, but complying, they departed in military trucks for town.

The messenger rushed in with two white message slips and flipped them down on my desk. My gaze swept them—then froze on the words typed there . . .

Baguio bombed.

For a long moment I held my breath as though in a queer, stubborn refusal to accept the message—to accept anything of that fatal minute in time's headlong rush.

Baguio bombed . . .

Baguio . . . The summer capital of the Philippines! Just a few score miles north of us. People were dead or dying there—citizens of the United States of America and of the Commonwealth of the Philippines were dying of wounds from Japanese bombs hurled down on our own territory! Something of that stunned disbelief that I had experienced so profoundly in the nighttime returned to me now.

But it was of short duration.

"They've hit Baguio!" I exclaimed, just as the messenger reappeared with another white slip. What now! . . .

" . . . And Cabanatuan!"

I heard Lou Bell's muttered exclamation of incredulousness. Yes, it was incredible. But it was a fact. We'd been beaten to the punch. Beaten fair and square. While we debated and wrangled that morning and some had vehemently counseled waiting until we had some definite indication—an "overt act"—that Japan intended to hit the Philippines as well as Hawaii, the enemy had come in and blasted the summer capital and one of our principal airfields outside Clark and Nichols. We didn't know then, we'd had no word, that not only had the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor thousands of miles to the east, but they'd also hit a lightning blow at Malaya, many hundreds of miles to the west! And now they were smashing at the Philippines!

Somebody had done some mighty poor guessing for the past ten or fifteen years!

The minutes swept by. There were no further reports of bombings. The damage at Baguio was not believed to be of serious proportions. We could not be sure about Cabanatuan. Apparently the B-10's there had been blown up.

First blood! And it had been drawn from us.

Could we have foreseen the dismal chaos before us—could we have had a flash of the hellish hours of mounting disaster piled one atop another for weeks and weeks until the battered sensibilities could register shocks no more as shocks, but merely as the natural expectancy of a doped somnambulistic existence—even the strongest and most courageous of those among us would have faltered in utter dismay.

Where had the bombers gone?

They'd turned northward, the Warning Service indicated. The 20th Pursuit had not seen them, for they'd altered course about Rosales and struck at Baguio instead of coming straight for Clark. By this time the 20th took cognizance of dropping fuel indications and returned to Clark, cruising at the alert while the heavy and medium bombers landed. Then the 20th and 17th both landed for refueling and the alert.

The 21st was at Del Carmen, the 17th and 20th had landed, almost out of fuel . . . *We were wide open!*

The comparative calm did not live long. It was merely a momentary pause before the onslaught.

We could not know it then, but the doom of the Air Force in the Philippines was to come within the next few turns of the clock hands, black against the staring white face.

For us the end was beginning almost before the start had finished.

True, we would go on. And we would deliver some stout blows to the enemy—stouter than he'd ever experienced before. But we would be fatally struck, and the main strength of our air efforts would pour out of our wounds within the next few hours. It was to taper down—down—down. We could not know then, thank God, that there was to be no replacement, no reinforcement—no help of any kind from that hour until the end.

It was almost exactly 11:30 when Air Warning reported the

next alarming situation. A very large formation of hostile aircraft was coming in from the China Sea. Its direction of flight would bring it on over Manila.

Immediately thereafter the telephoned verification came through from a dozen watchers. But not of only one flight. Apparently there were others. One report spoke of fifty-four heavy bombers. Another spoke of twenty-seven machines of mixed sizes. Apparently fighters. Just what the composition and numbers were, we could not determine. But that there were more flights than one seemed certain. And there were both bombers and fighters, or heavy bombers and dive bombers.

Immediately the 34th Pursuit Squadron roared away from Nichols Field and spiraled for altitude above Manila Bay near the city. The 17th meanwhile took off from Clark and placed itself in interception position over Bataan Peninsula.

"All unessential personnel clear the building! . . . All out! . . . Air raid! . . .

Hoarse voices bellowed through the corridors and into each room. At that time "unessential personnel" meant everyone except telephone, teletype, and radio operators and members of the Air Warning Service on duty at the time. From buck private to General Brereton, other personnel seized gas masks and helmets and abandoned the building.

For where . . .

There were no shelters. Only a few days before had there been any thought of digging slit trenches. Crews had been busy during the morning digging and erecting sandbag protection for the building. But the results were hardly impressive. Shallow, weakly walled, the trenches also were much too close to the building should a stick of bombs be aimed at the structure. Strafing would be almost sure to include the trenches.

What else, then?

Anything else! . . . Just get out and get hidden.

Some ran for the road south of the headquarters—the San Pedro Makati road joining South Manila and the municipality of Makati with Fort McKinley. This highway was lined with good drainage ditches and had a cover of trees. The road immediately in front of

our building had no cover. Here and there in the rice paddy fields beyond were clumps of dense foliage. But real cover was half a mile and more away. Then one could lie in the paddy fields themselves and try to dig under the dried remains of the last harvest. Any port in a storm!

The Manila and Fort McKinley sirens had wailed themselves into silence—an unforgettable silence that, once experienced, retains its characteristics of tense, unreal waiting, extending itself minute after minute like a slowly stretching rubber band which has become thin and white with the approach of an elastic limit.

Still we waited, our ears straining for the first drone of engines. But none came.

Gradually we drifted back into the building.

That strained, tight interval of quivering unreal silence had seen scores of young lives into eternity and had smashed the heart of our bomber power in the Philippines.

At 12:15 the 20th Pursuit Squadron, having completed its refueling, taxied into position for taking off. Above the drumming of the squadron engines came a new sound—an irregular, pulsating drone. At almost the same instant, the earth leaped to the hammering flames of a dozen explosions—followed at once by dozens more.

Colonel George and Major Grover, commanding the 24th Pursuit Group, were engaged in a fast, staccatoed telephone conversation. Radio communications had failed at the critical moment. So had the teletype. And only then had telephone connections been established. Precious moments, valuable beyond all reckoning, had been lost. The vital information to and from Iba had been lost in the breakdown. For many pivotal minutes the big plotting board at Nielson was without the intelligence that gave it life and usefulness.

It was during this fate-charged interval that the air armada coming in over the China Sea altered its course northward and was lost to us. Where? . . . Where? . . .

Colonel George's anxiety-burdened inquiry for information was answered even as he heard the thundering detonations over the telephone.

The enemy had been found. Or certainly one flight had . . . He

was at Clark Field—showering tons of high explosive upon the landing field, the hangars, the administration and operations buildings, and the aircraft on the ground.

It was 12:17.

The first wave of enemy aircraft had hardly lifted itself away beyond the rising pall of heavy, flame-charged smoke when the next wave roared in to the kill. This time it was not so much the bombs as the strafing. With a din of worlds colliding, the guns of the defenders and the bombs and guns of the attackers blazed hate and lead into each other. The screams of the hurt rose even above the crash of battle. Not all came from American and Filipino victims. Again and again the streaming tracers from ground defense guns drilled their hot way into and through Nipponese ships and their occupants, and together they crashed to the earth. Twice two of them plunged their flaming comets into the ground at identical moments.

Once a single Japanese plane in screaming descent flattened like a glancing bullet and smashed full speed into a hangar loaded with planes. A suicide smash? Not likely. Probably a dead pilot.

Even under the hail of lead and steel, four of the 20th Pursuit eluded the hail of metal and struggled for fighting altitude against the overwhelming flood of enemy aircraft. Five more maneuvering for take-off, amid the indescribable confusion and the flashing clouds of smoke and dust, crashed one after another, either through pilot mishap or through the weight of enemy armament. Five more were flaming sieves from the murderous strafing.

There was no dive bombing, although dive-bomber types strafed.

Again and again they came, blasted, roared away—and came again. Helpless American bombers, stalled all over the field, hammered defiance from their turrets and side blisters until the fire slackened as their fanatically courageous crews were shot into eternity, or driven into the open by the heat of gasoline-fed flames. The crews had been taking turns at lunch when the attack came. With complete disregard for their lives they had rushed out in a futile attempt to take the big machines off. The casualties from this forlorn hope alone made ghastly reading on the reports the

next day. One after another, these vitally needed, expensive, irreplaceable bombers collapsed in bullet-ridden heaps, or sagged to the ravenous flames that were consuming them.

There had been some dispersion, unquestionably, but a photograph which fell into my possession for a few moments—a photograph made by one of our own pilots in flight over the stricken field—showed through a frame of sweeping smoke, four B-17's lined up neatly. Other photographs, taken on the ground, all told a nauseating story of half-measures. The dispersion conceivably might have been adequate for high-level bombing, but offered only some inconvenience to determined low-level strafers. This entire set of photographs was removed from my desk a few nights later. No one seemed to know what happened to them. Whether they were removed by order, I do not know—nor do I have any ideas as to whose order it might have been.

Hangars aflame. Airplanes aflame, barracks aflame . . .

Clark Field had reached its pinnacle. Never again in this war would it be the same.

Seventeen of the Flying Fortresses were reduced to utter wrecks, to piles of molten metal. Two others were riddled, but possibly repairable.

Where was our fighter force during the carnage?

The 3rd Pursuit Squadron, which had been dispatched to make an interception over the China Sea, had not seen the enemy. Part of the 3rd had joined the cruising units of the 34th and 17th over the Manila Bay region.

Why hadn't these airplanes made off for Clark Field at top speed? Feeble as they would have been against the tremendous force smashing the field, at least they might have exacted their toll from the murderous enemy.

The answer was that they had not known of the catastrophe at Clark.

They had achieved their assigned patrol position over the bay and made a single radio check with Operations at Clark—who verified the earlier instruction to patrol until further orders. Having thus checked, they obeyed instructions, sweeping like birds of prey for the first sight of an enemy reportedly coming in from the

west. (The flight that struck Clark actually came in over Lingayen Bay and was initially reported—but not subsequently, because of bad communications.)

A second radio check with Clark.

No reply.

Puzzled, the squadron leaders considered. It was not unusual to fail to make every connection on the five-minute checks. After all, radio is radio . . . Still, after the second failure, the situation became distinctly uncomfortable. Should they abandon their assignment to cover Manila? That might leave the city wide open to a major attack. These harassed lads, glancing through goggles over one side and then the other of their roaring fighters, had no way of knowing that a direct hit on the center of communication in that first smash of bombs on Clark had erased in one second any possibility of land-to-air radio instruction. And so, as they wheeled uneasily high over the bay, only the four P-40's of the 20th Pursuit Squadron that had managed to lift in the face of the maelstrom were pitted against from fifty-four to eighty-one—or more—Japanese aircraft possessed of the advantages of surprise, height, perfect organization, plan, and superior armament on every count.

What then had happened to the 21st Pursuit Squadron, which had been ordered off Del Carmen Field to cover Clark when the original alarm came in?

Owing to excessive dust whirled up by the propellers of ships taxiing into position and taking off, great delay had been experienced in forming the squadron over Del Carmen. On this account, no interception occurred!

Alarmed at the continued radio silence, and forced by dropping fuel levels to take some action on their own initiative, the squadron leader of the 17th decided to peel away from the bay area. The sleek fighters headed toward Clark Field. There was no trouble locating it. Volumes of smoke still rolled heavenward.

But the enemy had fled.

Horror-struck, the pilots of the 17th realized that the mangled condition of the field precluded a landing. Unable to raise the radio control station, they bore away through the smoke-heavy

sky and, leaving the sickening scene of death and ruin behind, circled Del Carmen for a landing.

The 34th continued to patrol the bay area until fuel limitations compelled them to return to Nichols.

But the complete record of this blood-red and black day had not been entered.

The elements of the 3rd Pursuit Squadron, originally sent to attempt an interception over the China Sea, suddenly heard the station at Iba shrilling a warning of an approaching force, again coming in directly from the China Sea. The radar set at Iba had been plotting the approaching flight and was notifying the Plotting Board of the rapidly developing situation.

But the luck of the Philippine Air Force truly had run out. The same communications interruption that had proved so fatal in the north, now put its sinister finger on the west. Nielson never received these warnings and therefore had no basis for calling up help—even if help could have been rallied. It must be remembered that nearly all fighters, having been on patrol over the bay, required refueling urgently.

The same was true of the 3rd Pursuit. As it was circling its home field, fifty-four heavy bombers accompanied by an unknown number of dive-bomber types and possibly some fighters bore in on the field.

The 3rd, rallying, attacked this huge armada. So numerous were the roaring enemy machines that targets were certain to cross the gun sights even if pilots had had no time to aim. And this was almost true. Outnumbered at least four to one, the 3rd's 40's sliced in and out of the fight with as many guns blazing as would fire.

One of the enemy heavy bombers wheeled crippled, and leaving a cone of smoke, turned seaward. Repeatedly smaller ships broke from the implacable formations and plunged earthward.

But it was the dwarf against the giant. And miracles do not occur frequently, or they no longer would be miracles. Below the contending forces, Iba field and all its installations, including the radar, dissolved in a fury of flame and fragments. The field was gone, and with it six or eight airplanes on the ground, waiting

maintenance attentions, such as engine changes. High-level bombing had accounted for all this.

Unable to sting deeply enough to frustrate the destructive bombing, the gallant 3rd did so disorganize the enemy that his strafing plans were forced into abandonment. He paid off before the viciously attacking 40's—even though five of them had been shot down during the first few minutes of fighting.

The remainder, some of them with only a few drops of gasoline left in their tanks, were unable to pursue. Three of these crash-landed on the beach, their tanks dry. The ten that were left reformed and made for O'Donnell airport, not far from Clark, where they landed and eventually were refueled from hastily accumulated facilities at still-burning Clark.

In proportion to the total numbers involved, the casualties at Iba were as great as those at Clark. The dead were buried on the beach and wherever else it was possible to prepare a suitable grave. The wounded made their way as best they could across the intervening sixty and more miles to Nichols and Fort McKinley.

And so it was that, when the night of the Fatal Eighth came to shut out all except the flickering flames, staggering reports coming over the now reestablished communication lines revealed that we had suffered hundreds of casualties of now irreplaceable personnel, had lost at least twenty first-line fighter planes, at least seventeen Flying Fortresses, and an as yet unknown number of miscellaneous war planes at Iba, Clark, and Cabanatuan. Included were B-18's, B-10's, and observation aircraft.

In a few hours we had lost at least a fifth of all our fighters and half of our heavy bombers, plus the miscellaneous ten or a dozen yet to be tallied. The losses in ground equipment alone would prove paralyzing.

We'd had our overt act . . .

Shortly after midnight, almost immediately after telephonic communication had been reestablished in the Manila and Clark Field area, reports came in of another large formation droning the night sky above central Luzon. The stars were blotted by the sinister shapes pointed toward Clark and Manila.

Only one flight of the exhausted 17th Pursuit Squadron could be put into the air to meet this new threat in the darkness. Again the old enemy, dusty airfield strips, collaborated with the human foe from the north. Despite timed waits to allow the dense clouds of airscrew dust to settle, two P-40's lost their guides, went out of control and smashed, killing one of the pilots. The remaining four got into the air. No hostile planes were encountered.

It is possible that this flight of night marauders turned and went out to sea. All trace of them was lost for some hours.

Then they struck with terrifying suddenness.

### *"Shapes that move by night"*

I was scheduled to go on duty at 0400 of the 9th.

A sleep so sketchy and unreal that actually it comprised only a nightmarish review, furiously paced, of the demoralizing events of the hours before, terminated with uncompromising finality at three o'clock.

The floor shuddered beneath my bare feet. The night air puffed inward against me with stuttering hot breath.

Then came the thunder.

*Thruu-ummp . . . Thruu-ummmp . . . Thruu-uuumMP . . .*

The bunched foliage of the shrubs beyond the porch screens leaped into black outline, sharp against the sudden vivid red and orange of the sky.

Again and again the mighty bursts of sound shouldered all other things before them. Then trailed off into lesser manifestations of evil that now registered in their turn.

First the increasing roar of racing bomber engines crowded to the full.

They were approaching—coming this way—at terrific speed.

Now the rising clamor of small arms, machine guns . . . As if springing from the hedge shrubs themselves, tiny red and yellow fireflies shot angrily into the sky and were gone. From every corner of the black, hidden earth they came. Arcking, boring—leaping.

Tracers, they were, from scores of machine guns hidden in the dark pits of the McKinley countryside.

I was in my ready uniform, my helmet clapped on. In the din I had shouted something to the others in the house—something about “Here it comes!” But the Colonel and Lefty had leaped from their beds at the same instant.

Now the whole night was filled with the roar of enemy engines.

But great as this sound was, it was as nothing when a second later the next stick of bombs made the night hideous with the bellow of their explosions.

The seeming vacuum of sound following immediately, filled itself up quickly with the redoubled fury of ground guns.

But already the diminishing roar of engines testified to the ineffectiveness of this storm of lead directed against unseen targets.

They were going away. Was it only to bank again and sweep in for another smash?

But the steady diminuendo belied this. Soon they were lost entirely to the spattering of ground arms of the green, panicky troops for the first time under the terrifying fire of a purposeful enemy experienced and cunning in the ways of murder by might.

Gradually this too thinned out to a few isolated reports.

I was on the telephone. It was age-long minutes before the over-worked board finally acknowledged my signal. Through to headquarters I heard the first. And even as the voice came to me, I could discern the growing glow in the sky westward from Fort McKinley.

“Nichols Field!” came the report. “Not too bad, but there’re casualties . . . Direct hit on the Bachelor Officers’ Quarters. Hangar Four is a mess. It’s burning now. Some fuel gone and a couple of airplanes at least . . . B-18’s, I hear. Can’t get close enough. Then there’s something hit bad up the road toward Fort McKinley. Fire up there, too . . . Better come down, sir. There’s some funny stuff goin’ on.”

“Right away. Thanks.”

Rapidly I reported to Colonel George. Then quitted the quarters. By the light of the rapidly growing fire over the hills to the

west I could see my waiting car plainly. The same light guided us along the post road. But we did not go fast.

"These sentries are crazy," declared the driver. "They'd shoot their own grandmother tonight . . . And I think a lot of 'em have."

"I don't blame them."

"Me neither. And they aren't the only ones. The troops all through here are just as bad. I thought they were goin' to blow their own heads off the way they were firin' at them planes. Crazy as hell!"

"What's burning down there between here and Nichols?" I asked as we picked up speed west of Fort McKinley.

"Some kind of a truck. Been burning for an hour."

"Where?"

"Funny about that, sir," he replied. "It's out in a field—all by itself. Lies about two hundred yards west of the Pan American Beam Station."

"Was it burning when you came up?"

"Yes, sir. I saw it burnin' before that, too."

"Anyone around it?" I pursued, lifting my eyes above this nearer glow to the great illuminated diffusion above Nichols Field. Alas, it was only the first of those fiery monuments of destruction I was to see building heavenward over Nichols.

"Not a soul. Here we come . . . And there's someone around now."

We had rounded a curve and were nearing the point where a secondary road joined the main highway. The secondary served, among other points, the Pan American Beam Station radio installation—the transmitter and aerial system. In a small depression, a few rods from a native shack and perhaps two hundred yards from the little white station building, the flames of the burning truck still illuminated the countryside near by even more brilliantly than the fire rolling skyward from Nichols. There were troops in the vicinity now, mostly small groups with their rifles at the alert. A dozen or so were clustered around the beam station.

"It's been hit!" I exclaimed suddenly.

And at that moment something else registered. Maybe it was our

coincidental position at that second. I don't know. But as I stared, a sudden fact established itself in my mind. There was an exact and undeviating line connecting three points: the smashed transmitter station, the burning truck—and the flaming hangar on distant Nichols Field.

A perfect line-up! We receive a blast at Nichols, and then out here at the site of this isolated, unmarked target!

Unmarked?

Not if you release just over that blazing tank truck there. The carry will bring bombs down on the very roof of that little transmitter station house, and the scatter will mutilate the aerial system farther away.

It was all confirmed at headquarters after further telephone reports had been received from Nichols Field. And as I listened to the voice on the other end, the diabolical picture became clear in my mind.

No, indeed, I could not find it within me to speak disparagingly of any trigger-nervous sentry who that night might have shot "at his own grandmother."

He could not possibly have caught more than a hint of the position of the thin shapes that rushed through the dark above him. But he could hear the thundering results of their call. And he was terrified. But did he know of the enemies that were much closer to him? They moved in the nighttime, too, and they were on every hand. They'd moved that night, and because they had, the aim of those who swept out of the darkness was true and deadly.

These simple soldiers did not know of what I'd just learned—of the sudden twinkling of flares at Nichols immediately before the coming of the bombers. The perfect approach line to the field had been indicated by these mysterious little points of fire that came into being silently and simultaneously in a dozen places—but always at a distance from puzzled sentries, the sentries had no opportunity for investigation. With bewildering swiftness the black sky filled with the roar of enemy bombers. Before they could take a dozen steps, the earth leaped to meet them in blinding fingers of flame. For one fire-fused moment trees, structures, and men were carved motionless in red. And the very foundations of the world trembled

to the blows. A darkness blacker than night rushed in upon the brilliance and swept it out of existence. Then, slowly at first, but with gathering strength there came a rebirth. Flames, dark-red and choked with smoke, rose from the shattered buildings.

Nor did the terrified brown soldiers firing their pieces wildly into the air know of the abandoned gasoline truck which had burst into flames seemingly on its own volition, at a point quite removed from the field but strangely close to the powerful beam transmitter station.

Straight as an arrow the enemy planes cut for the burning truck. Two hundred yards beyond it the bombs flung the earth into an upward cascade that tore through the antenna system and riddled the small structure housing the delicate apparatus. On the little porch in front, the figure of the Filipino guard stiffened and slid to the ground, while the porch roof, its corner support suddenly nonexistent by reason of the rain of fragments, bobbed crazily for a moment, then hung in drooping suspension over his inert form.

They did not know these things of their own people, who smiled at them in the daytime and moved silently at night to direct the slant-eyed men from Formosa.

These were the Ganaps, or Sakdalistas—Filipino sympathizers with the Japanese. The bitter hatred of the old rebel, Aguinaldo, and the political cunning of the more youthful and even more treacherous Ramos had welded them into a malignant anti-American force, a keen-edged, utterly willing tool with the most perfect camouflage in the world. They were everywhere. We knew not just where, nor how many. But of their presence we were to be assured in sinister ways, the first being this perfectly coordinated piece of subversion.

Yet for years the G-2 Section of the Philippine Department Headquarters had been forced by a parsimonious Washington to pit its tiny, totally inadequate group of men against a virile octopus, whose extensions in the Islands were known to such men as Colonel O'Rear, his right-hand man Lieutenant Colonel J. K. Evans, and Captain Raymond.

No, indeed, one could not blame any soldier for being so nervous as to favor his own grandmother with a potshot.

We knew of the presence of the Ganaps in other ways, too. We knew of them by the sudden flaming ascent into the night sky of soaring rockets. From any point they would go up: here, close to the edges of the guarded zones of our flying field—there, by the sea wall of the old Fort itself—yes, even from the blacked-out depths of our own trench-cut parade ground at Fort McKinley!

Just before dawn a disheveled sentry came striding rapidly into our office.

"A rocket just went up at the northeast corner of Nielson Field, sir," he said excitedly. "It's the second one from there. We've been all over that ground and there isn't a soul there."

We went through the darkened corridors to the front door. Dawn was paling the eastern sky for a new day. A new day of what? I thought as we stood there, searching the non-revealing countryside for a hint. There was none. We turned back; a slow flicker registered against the cream-colored outside wall of the building. We reversed. Arcking a red scar against the northern sky was this evil signature of our unseen enemies. As I watched it, a momentary panic raced through me. The rocket itself could do no harm. But the malignant significance of it was something else, something much more powerful in its psychological effect; for one fleeting second it brought back with a rush all the unnamed terror of the night for man.

With a muttered curse the sentry beside me jerked his rifle to his shoulder. But he did not fire. The impulse was natural. His gun did not speak. In the distance, though, two flat smacks in the warm moist air announced that a gun had been fired.

The dawn was full upon us before we realized it, and still we sat in the suffocating, overloaded atmosphere of our light-tight offices and pored over the increasing amount of information and counterinformation chivvying toward us from all parts of the Islands.

A long indicator line was drawn from the La Union coast on the situation map, and a cryptic report was entered, of enemy troops suddenly appearing simultaneously at several municipalities. We knew they would make their appearance in the provinces before long. Now it had come. And from the far north, too. Aparri.

And again, midway between Aparri and La Union. Respectable merchants, never too conspicuous, suddenly ceased to be merchants, and in a twinkling the enemy actually was in the midst of the town, the erstwhile trader attired in a Japanese officer's uniform, and heading the reception committee. And here it was the mayor himself who was the Fifth Column contact. He'd been planted in that town years before, like hundreds of others throughout the Islands, and carefully trained in his responsibilities, patient, friendly, shrewd, watchful-ready.

During the morning came a succession of messages, spoken in frantic voices: of hostile forces moving in to cut communications, to take possession of Bureau of Posts stations, telephone switchboards, and radio stations. Sometimes there would be a final warning message that enemy troops were advancing stealthily through the tropical undergrowth or down mountain passes toward the faithful Filipino's station. Then an ominous silence. Sometimes, there would be only a significant cessation of messages without previous indication of approaching trouble.

From coast lookouts came nerve-taut stories of warships moving at high speed. And these were not only from Luzon. Mindoro, Panay, Masbate, and even the far-away Palawan spoke of dark rakish hulls swiftly sliding along the horizon under flat wedges of smoke.

By noon our brains were weary; there was a tightness that constricted the flow of further thought. Almost mechanically we left, as relief officers came in.

I stopped at Interceptor Command headquarters. Colonel George was pale, but the brightness of his eyes was undiminished. Captain Sprague's eyes were red-rimmed with fatigue, but his motions and his mental output were keeping pace with his chief's. At the filter board, Major Coyle worked on, hour after hour, his ears acute and discerning and his judgments unimpaired by the endless hours of hammering.

"We've transferred the air echelon of the 17th Pursuit to Clark Field and brought it up to strength by transferring some of the remaining airplanes of the hard-hit 3rd," explained the Colonel. "The rest of the 3rd's 40's will go to Nichols and bring the 34th

up to strength. . . . We've got two full squadrons yet," he grinned. "And that doesn't count practically a full one in the 21st and plenty of fight in what's left of the 20th."

The enemy might whip that little man's squadrons under sheer weight of numbers, gunfire, and superior experience, but they would never whip that little man. And as long as he lived Japan would have an enemy as implacable as any that the blood-lusty sons of Nippon ever could produce.

"Where are they today?"

"Oh, they're out in their flyin' machines, all right," he replied. "We've been keeping awake tracking them over half the Far East. But so far, they haven't become too cozy for comfort."

I wanted to sleep. I was much too tired to sleep. Something inside would not let down. So why go home? Instead, I went to Fort Santiago in response to a telephone call from G-2. A radio receiver thrown from a fatally hit Japanese bomber had been recovered near Clark Field, and sent down. Did we want to examine it? We did. And along with it three bullet-headed Japanese flying officer prisoners—the first of the war. They were lucky to be alive. Whenever they came down outside the military precincts, savage Filipino hillsmen dispatched them with a speed much too great to permit desirable questioning for information. Sometimes they slung them on poles like wild pigs, sometimes it was swift execution by jungle knife.

The radio unit was interesting. It was plain why they wanted to destroy it—the settings gave us the operating frequencies. It was interesting from other standpoints, too. All the symbols were in Japanese, but many of the parts were standard American.

I tried to sleep that afternoon. I was to go back on duty at eight o'clock in the evening—or 2000 hours. But it was no use. Another bath was a substitute, anyway.

Except for Captain Sprague, we were together for dinner that night. And strangely it was a cheerful gathering. Maybe it was a deliberate and self-propagated anesthesia. Anyway, the net result was an almost intoxicating relief. Lefty had been on a nonstop reconnaissance and organization job of evolving airfields out of paddy fields in the Laguna de Bay region.

"What're you using for graders, bulldozers, dragline buckets, and trucks?" asked the Colonel, downing a mouthful of beef.

Lefty grinned.

"Well, sir, we aren't using graders, bulldozers, dragline buckets, and trucks," he retorted. "We've got thousands of men, women, and children, instead. They're working with their bare hands. They're using crude rakes and scrapers made of bamboo. And for bulldozers and trucks they use carabao carts and stoneboats, each carrying something like half a cubic yard, or maybe more. To dump the cart, they have to slip the yoke over the carabao's head. The load automatically tips the cart."

"I don't think the Philippine Department engineer officer would approve," commented the Colonel gravely. But his eyes showed the pride he felt at the work in hand and at the down-to-cases manner of doing it.

"Hell!" said Lefty with great feeling.

And those were the methods that were to result in finished landing strips in two weeks. Actually, at the time the Japanese put an end to our peacetime existence, we still did not have one single field ready of those which had been planned, and for which construction had been undertaken between May and December. But through the plain muscle-grind of hundreds and hundreds of Filipino families, through the seemingly futile scrapings of their bamboo tools, and with the aid of sleepy, thick-hided carabao slogging along with their little carts, we completed four usable landing strips before the enemy closed in upon us ten days later and forced us to forfeit it all in favor of a last-ditch stand on Bataan.

### "... And riposte"

Back in the fetid furnace of the office, the oppressiveness of war's insidious creep closed in upon us once more.

Hardly had I begun to sift through the latest sheaf of messages when a helmeted sentry with drawn automatic knocked sharply and entered. There had been an issue of sidearms that day, but so restricted was the supply that only staff officers and sentries were

given guns. With what the others would protect themselves in case of a paratroop attack, I had no idea—their fists, I supposed.

"There're some lights flashing down at the far end of the field, sir," he said. "A patrol's making its way down there, but I thought you'd want to know."

We went out into the soft, star-bright night. As we stepped through the doorway, a sharp burst of shots came from the west, followed at once by two from the southern corner of the field.

"And make it stick this time!" growled the sentry staring into the black.

But his words were succeeded instantly by the lift of a red rocket from the north. And then, far off beyond the cluster of half-finished barracks which were being constructed for Headquarters personnel several hundred yards east of the building (a community-to-be which we had nicknamed Claggettville, until officially discouraged by the one most concerned), another rocket cleared the dark earth and burst with a yellow flame and a faint report.

The sentry spoke savagely. We'd been joined by other dark figures. Their tense curses constituted ample evidence of the peculiarly helpless feeling that these night displays from hidden sources inevitably produced.

From the Makati road junction the sharp voice of a sentry challenging came across the paddy fields. Then the swift acceleration of a car engine, and in a moment we could discern its darker shadow spotted by two pale blue lights in front. Quickly it drew up. Armed men descended. A smaller figure in the loose garment of a Filipino was hustled out and over to the entrance of the building. The leader of the patrol recognized me in the shaded corridor light.

"Here is one of 'em, sir," he said grimly. "He was signaling with a flashlight to someone further down the road. We're cleaning out the whole neighborhood."

An unspeaking Tagalog of uncertain years, but possibly forty-five, returned my inquisitive stare with dark, smoldering eyes.

"Inside," I directed.

Little was to be learned from him. His story was quite too

prompt—obviously, he had been prepared. He'd been herding his carabao along the highway to his home, he said. It was very dark, and he had used the flashlight to help the beast. That was all.

Unfortunately for him he had committed the grievous error of carrying the identification card issued by the Ramos organization. Faced with it, he made no attempt to evade the matter. Yes, he was a Sakdalista, but he was not guilty of any intent to violate blackout regulations, or of signaling. Whenever convenient, he could not understand my questions. I was getting no place. But I knew someone who could, and, seizing the telephone, I called for the nearest Philippine Constabulary post. In fifteen minutes a sharp-faced young officer arrived. The barrage of Tagalog with which he attacked the taciturn suspect soon pried him from his fox hole. This was wine and meat to the Constabulary. They hated the Sakdalista with a fulsome fervor, and were familiar with the best methods of counter-action.

"Are you satisfied?" I asked him, after twenty minutes of grilling.

"I am, sir. Do I have custody of the prisoner?"

"He's your man. You will take him to the Constabulary and there arrange to conduct a proper investigation before taking action?"

"Of course, sir . . . But he is not a stranger to us."

I nodded permission. They left.

Late the next morning I received a call from the Constabulary chief. The Ramos adherent had failed to impress his own people with the tender story of solicitude for the welfare of a carabao. There were other matters, too—matters the Constabulary had been waiting for some time to square up.

They did.

This was war. Justice was swift.

A ship convoy in Lingayen Gulf! Then, the invasion was beginning in earnest; that is, unless we could smash it first. Orders went out to the 17th and 21st squadrons. All available planes would be readied for a predawn take-off. The mission would be twofold. Fighter protection would be afforded for bombardment. Following the bombing of the enemy vessels, the fighter squadrons would

sweep in to strafe. This plan would involve considerable coordination, since several outfits were participating and one of them (the 21st), composed of P-35's, would not have the requisite speed for a sustained swift movement. Still, they had to do it. This was serious.

Anxiously we hung over the teletype or haunted the radio unit in the building court.

Then it began to come in.

The bombardment had laid its eggs amidst the approaching fleet. A heavy transport had been given a sinking blow. Another was on fire. Others had been rocked as the big bombers swung in lower with their destructive loads. While they attacked, the 40's of the 17th Pursuit formed an air umbrella. In addition, these fighters had delivered a strafing attack which threw the closely packed troops on the transports into screaming panic. It was our turn to draw blood, and we took it with a viciousness that only those could accumulate who had suffered the repeated lashings we had already experienced. The 40's passed and repassed, pumping lead into the jammed decks with each roaring sweep, and then as they lifted, retaining some of their ammunition for a possible fight on their way home, the 21st Pursuit Squadron units dove in like snub-nosed bullets.

Unable to match the pace of their more modern mates, the slower 35's only then had been able to join the fight. But what these stubby little fighters lacked in clean heels, they more than compensated for in the stinging fury of their attack. With total disregard for the mass of antiaircraft fire being directed against his squadron, Lieutenant Sam Marrett cut in so low above the troop-heavy transports that his guns cleared a visible spot in the panic-stricken mass below him. Swiftly he winged over and came at them again. One of his wingmen peeled away, fatally hit by machine-gun fire. As though determined to assume the double load, Lieutenant Marrett sliced in with roaring engine so close that it seemed he must surely crash headlong into the rigging. His guns were continuous blowtorches. The red-hot tracers ripped into men and material alike.

Below him was a sudden glittering flash. Then, before his snub-nosed fighter could clear the length of the ship, a terrific

blast flung him far upward. He was lost to sight amid that shattering explosion.

But he did not die alone. The heavily laden transport, split by the blast his guns had created, heeled over; the sea rushed into her, and she was gone. These sons of the Rising Sun were mortal. They could drown just like other men. It was the first time that Japan felt the weight of American air wrath; it was not to be the last.

The score was far from being even. But it was not all lopsided, now.

The morning was to bring in greater news. Fragmentary at first it was, but it filled us with a wild exultation. From the far north came cryptic messages of another Japanese casualty off Aparri. This time, not a thin-skinned transport, but a heavily armored battleship. The description was there. I raced into my office and snatched our copy of *Jane's Fighting Ships*. But there was hardly a moment to study it before Colonel Brady in General Brereton's office called for it. Point for point, we compared the description.

"It's either the *Haruna* or her sister!" exclaimed the Chief of Staff. "At least she must be one of that class."

Again we compared. Yes, there could be no doubt of it. It was the *Haruna*, or one of her sister ships. Tremendous units they were. Not the best the Japanese Navy possessed, but first-line heavy sluggers none the less. And so, two days after Pearl Harbor we had evened the loss of the *Arizona*, now a burnt-out hulk on the mud of the harbor floor.

But we had paid. Captain Colin Kelly—the tall, dark, flashing-eyed chap who had given such reliable assistance in expediting the original passage of the Fortresses from Darwin to Clark Field—would not be home.

After dealing the *Haruna* a mortal blow and leaving her foundering off the north coast of Luzon, Captain Kelly had headed his B-17 homeward. She had not escaped unscathed. But there was nothing serious—that is, not until six enemy fighters suddenly dove out of the blue almost over Clark Field. The fire of two of them was concentrated and devastating. Flames raged in the bomb bay. The big ship was done. Captain Kelly ordered abandonment. All jumped but one. He was dead of wounds. The parachutes blos-

somed wide. No, not all . . . One failed to open. It was that of Captain Kelly. Enemy fighters machine-gunned the others, but without effect.

Captain Kelly would not be home.

The 21st Pursuit Squadron had returned to Del Carmen, re-gassed, reloaded, and had gone on alert station. After covering the landing of the bombardment returning from Lingayen, the 17th in turn landed, gassed, and went on alert station.

It was nearly eleven o'clock. And suddenly everything of substance and fiber within me seemed to crumble. Through the morning hours, excitement had sustained me. Now it was gone, and I with it. I was so weary that the effort of going to the front of the building and summoning a car to take me to quarters seemed impossible. Why not just flop down on the table in the map room. Yes, that was it. I started. But even before the door closed, the heady din of the guard whistles filled the corridors and all the rooms.

"All out! All out! . . . Air Raid! . . ."

I turned back. Lou Bell was standing in the doorway with a sheaf of messages.

"Everybody out. . . . And don't waste time!" he exclaimed. "They're coming in fast, and they are headed straight for this layout."

The staff needed no prod. In a few moments the room was cleared, as the helmeted figures, trailing a miscellany of gas masks, sidearms, and rifles, made for the exits.

"Serious, Lou?"

"This looks like it! There's a big formation of mixed stuff coming down from the north. They may smack Clark on the way, but the guess is that they will keep rolling right on down. We're going to catch it this time," he predicted grimly.

I took time to learn that the 17th had been dispatched for interception over Manila Bay. Likewise, the 34th was to assist the 17th over Manila Bay, but concentrate over the port area with orders to drive bombers away from our vital shipping and matériel concentration there. The weakened 21st was to patrol over Bataan Peninsula.

Hardly had the available fighter craft zoomed into the sky be-

fore a vast armada approached from the north. Immediately it became apparent, from information flashing through in tense hard-bitten phrases, that the enemy aerial superiority was overwhelming. Not counting bombers, the Japanese aircraft exceeded the total we had been able to put into the air by more than a hundred. These were fighter types of various models which had been covering the heavily droning bombers. Unquestionably, this was a major air thrust on the Manila area.

Nevertheless, our little V's of war-weary fighters closed with their overpowering enemy. Only two flights of the squadrons broke through to bombardment. These were led by Lieutenants Shepherd and Moore, but they were able to fire only short bursts before crowds of enemy fighters zoomed down and dispersed them, leaving the bombers to drone in toward Nichols Field. All three squadrons remained in the air, and although at times individual American planes took on antagonists numbering five and eight to one, they stayed in the area and fought with such effect that considerable disorganization to the total Japanese effort took place and the threatened assault against the port area was smashed completely.

The earth jumped to sledge-hammer blows. So intense was the shock that we at Nielson jerked swift glances around our restricted area, expecting to see those sections of earth lift into the sky.

But it was not Nielson Field. It was Nichols. Fighters forced to come in for refueling were smashed to bits. Medium bombers which had been unable to get off in time felt the sting of strafers' bullets, and one blew up with a tremendous blast. Another was riddled. High-level bombing alternated with murderous sweep of strafers. And the great torch of war reared its red and black hydra head as Post Exchange, Radio Station, Photographic Section, Headquarters and Quartermaster offices, barracks, and warehouses, shivered to bomb concussions and flamed to the heavens. In front of the hangars individual fires bloomed upwards swiftly as fighter planes, still being serviced, were set alight by tracer bullets. Two more roared madly down the field in a desperate effort to take off and rise to a fighting chance against the destroyers above. One struck the edge of a bomb crater, ground looped with one scream-

ing wing on the runway, and plunged headlong into a tree. The other burst into flames at the moment of take-off.

Another Japanese field day.

There was no fighter protection for helpless Nichols. All that could stay aloft and fire a gun were engaged in combat with the enemy cloud over Manila Bay.

There was no antiaircraft—except the solitary battery which had been installed half a mile west of Fort McKinley gates on San Pedro Makati Road. The field had no antiaircraft guns of its own—unless one generously classed machine guns as antiaircraft guns. And not very many of these, either. Some .50's, mostly .30's.

Came now the duller impact of bombs at a greater distance.

Cavite!

Came dull thunder. The continuous roll of a vast kettledrum. Through the miles of earth that separated the Navy Yard, the city of Cavite, and the adjoining municipality of San Roque from Nielson was transmitted the jolt of these gigantic blows.

High over the bay we could see them. One flight of twenty-seven—another flight of nine—and a third flight of eighteen. For brief intervals only, the shuddering percussion of the bombardment would diminish into the low, evil drone of the invaders. Then another chattering explosion of sound, heavy, vibrating, and violent, with its own story of destruction.

For the moment, the fury of the attack seemed to have shifted to Cavite. At least there was some sizable antiaircraft reply, either from the Navy Yard or from distant Corregidor. But in our area the fight had diminished to an occasional rattle of machine guns and small arms on the ground.

Suddenly, I was aware of intense hunger. The appearance of bomber planes always made me hungry. With simple animallike directness I set off along Makati Road for Fort McKinley. There was food there, and I was hungry. Foolish or not, I was on my way. From the shelter of ditches, culverts, and improvised shelters, white faces and Filipino faces peered at me as I strode down the center of the road.

“Bomb-happy,” was the explanation I heard from one of these hide-outs.

Well, maybe I was. But I don't think so. I was simply hungry. At that moment I heard the rattle of an approaching vehicle behind me. It was a truck, an empty, headed for Fort McKinley. I thumbed. He slowed, and I swung on to the pick-up body. Instantly he accelerated and drove like a madman along the violently curving highway.

Everywhere were groups of machine gunners and riflemen, mostly Philippine troops. All stood to their arms.

We were perhaps halfway between Nielson and Fort McKinley when suddenly there was a burst of small-arms fire directly ahead. At the same instant a P-35 appeared low over the McKinley hills and with an ear-stunning roar of exhaust streaked directly over our heads for McKinley. I pitched violently forward as the truck driver jammed on his brakes. He did not wait for the car to stop, but leaped from the cab and was gone in a hedge before I was able to recover. I in turn jumped to the road, fearful that the appearance of this P-35 meant hostile pursuit immediately behind him.

I was shouting, but no noise came from my throat. Or if it did, my ears could not detect it, smothered completely as it was by the head-splitting din of rifles and machine guns from every quarter. I was trying to cry out that the P-35 was a friendly plane and for them not to shoot at it. The wave of fire, for the moment obscuring even the heavier thunder of the bombing, rolled forward toward Nichols Field. I could not see the hapless fighter. I do not know whether it arrived. I don't see how that was possible.

But as quickly as the roll of firing moved eastward, a sudden new surge filled the west.

And again sweeping low over the rolling hills was one of our few remaining observation airplanes. This, like the P-35, had a radial engine and looked like an enemy. This time I ran down the center of the road, waving my arms and shouting:

"Don't shoot! . . . American plane."

But truly it was an unheard voice in a wilderness of fury. Every man who could raise his gun fired at the already riddled O-52.

Suddenly a Filipino soldier, whose nerves had been completely unstrung by the continuous shocks, leaped from his improvised fox hole and with a crazed glare in his eyes spun about toward

me. As he pivoted he pressed the trigger of his Springfield. The piece bellowed almost in my face.

But it was not my day. He had fired wildly as he turned, and the slug whipped harmlessly past and far out into the countryside. I was frozen with terror, and had the man made another attempt he certainly could have succeeded, for anything I might have done to prevent him.

But, instead of firing again, this battle-shocked Filipino flung his rifle into the ditch and went leaping across the adjacent field.

The whole thing had occurred in but a few seconds; but for me they were age-long seconds. My scattered wits collected themselves. I spun around to trace the fate of the O-52. My breath choked . . .

They'd done it . . . They'd got him!

The bullet-ripped observation plane was losing altitude with every revolution of its failing propeller. The pilot was still making every signal he knew in an effort to identify himself as a friendly plane. He wagged his wings. He flashed his running lights. But it was to no avail. At that moment a black object plummeted from the stricken ship, and the white folds of a parachute blossomed to check the fall. It was the pilot's observer.

To my horror, the volume of small-arms fire increased with the savage crescendo of a pack of howling wolves closing in on the kill. Nor did this murderous product of panic cease until both plane and parachute had disappeared beyond the tree line somewhere short of Nichols Field.

Sick with a violent shrinking within me, I finally resumed my journey toward Fort McKinley. Wars did such things. In war you killed, and the records of no war reveal how many times friend killed friend instead of foe. I learned later that this helpless observer, dangling in mid-air, had been struck by more than a dozen bullets. He was dead when he reached the ground.

Now the roll of bombing was closer. The earth pounded under my feet and the air seemed like some live thing, quivering and puffing.

Nichols Field again.

Now I was within Fort McKinley gates. High above I could

hear the shriller voice of fighter engines, and away to the south was a flight of leisurely cruising silver bombers. Maybe they'd hit McKinley now. I glanced quickly on both sides of the road. Poor cover here. In fact, nothing but officers' quarters—wooden, with the usual corrugated iron roof. I was a good half-mile from the nearest entrance to the McKinley tunnels.

But at that moment all thought of the bombers was brushed from my mind as, whipping low over the treetops, roared another of our observation planes belonging to the 2nd Observation Squadron.

His course was not true. He weaved violently from side to side, and as I looked brilliant tracers streaked past him in stabbing flashes. His throttle was full forward. But he was no match for the lean fighter that roared behind him—a fighter on whose thin fuselage was painted the garish red ball of the Rising Sun.

I stopped and stared at this deadly game of high-speed tag.

This fighter . . . It was no Japanese plane! It was not a Zero, it was not a 97, it was nothing I had seen in the lists of Japanese Army or Navy fighters. But I had seen it and, as it swooped like a hawk with murderous intent, I recognized it. It was a German Messerschmitt.

So intent was I upon this battle that I did not see the crouching Filipino soldier half hidden beneath a young tree, just at a point beyond the McKinley where the post road forked, one arm going to the service area to the south and the other leading to the main circle road named after General MacArthur's father. The soldier had been firing a long Tommy-gun burst at the swiftly moving Messerschmitt, turning slowly on his foot to keep the enemy under fire. He did not see me.

My knees crumbled. And the blast went over my head.

For the second time that day I had escaped death by a few inches . . . Death from a friend!

For a time I was too weak to go on. Fatigue, exhaustion, and reaction, all combined to rob me of even the will to move. In a sort of daze I covered the remaining distance to the quarters and dropped heavily upon my bunk. The house was empty. Everyone was in the tunnel.

I slept.

Hours later I awakened with a jerk. I was fully alert, as though I had leaped from bed into a cold bath. The war did that. There was no sluggish arousal. Reactions were immediate and violent. Bathed, refreshed, and dressed, I went out into the late afternoon sunshine. All sounds of the battle had gone. But not so the signs. The whole southwestern quadrant of the sky was a solid wall of multi-colored smoke reaching to the zenith. Cavite, the Navy Yard and San Roque were an uninterrupted mass of flame-ridden wreckage. Structures and shipyard facilities, barracks and hospitals, huge warehouses filled with valuable materials, and wide stretches of the municipality, all roared as one great furnace. No one knew the extent of the casualties. They might be numbered only in hundreds. More likely thousands. No one knew—no one would ever know. Late that day I passed a heavy truck piled high with loaded coffins.

A sudden uprush of smoke and flame in one broad quarter indicated a conflagration separate from the Cavite holocaust and nearer Fort McKinley. That would be Nichols Field.

The shades of night lowered to meet the sinister clouds rising from the stricken earth. But even the end of this frightful day would not allow us to forget. Throughout the dark hours the sky pulsed brilliantly, as though reflecting a demons' carnival, where death had danced the day through.

The enemy had delivered his swift and paralyzing left to our jaw immediately with the declaration of war. Then, while we staggered with buckling knees and uncertain feet, he crossed over swiftly with the right. In the span of two days and nights he had all but knocked us out, as far as the war in the air was concerned.

The status report of December 11 showed that our fighter strength now was approximately thirty aircraft. Of these only twenty-two were modern. And nearly every one of them, 40's and 35's alike, was in need of every class of maintenance. We still had more than a dozen B-17's capable of flying. They were scattered on three fields: Clark, San Marcelino, and Del Monte in Mindanao. With the declaration of war, the 17's, which two days before had been sent south to Mindanao for safety at the peremp-

tory order of General MacArthur, were returned north as missions directed. They remained based on Del Monte, however. It was these ships which had participated in the bombings off Vigan, in Lingayen Gulf, and those off Aparri.

True, we had extracted toll from the Nipponese invader. At least two fully loaded transports had been effectively blasted under water at Lingayen, and at least one transport and a battleship had been sunk off Aparri. Other shipping had been severely damaged. The enemy had lost at least half a hundred fighters and bombers. But while the loss of half a hundred was crippling to us, it was merely a severe slap to this colossus from the north. Our remaining fighter crews, hiding away in the hills surrounding the airfields, were faint with exhaustion. Planeless pilots turned to as mechanics and assisted harassed and overworked ground crews in their endless task of keeping battle-ridden airplanes in the air. Members of the 27th Bomber Group, an outfit which had not yet received airplanes, relieved exhausted fighter maintenance crews at Clark.

Casualties, too, had thinned the ranks of some outfits to a point where they could not function. Yet these casualties, severe as they had been, could not be compared with what might have occurred had it not been for a fortunate happenstance a few days before Pearl Harbor. A huge mechanical ditch-digging machine had been operating at Clark Field on a contractor drainage job. As the contractor was nearing the end of his task, it occurred to Colonel Maitland that this was an excellent opportunity to provide the field with easily prepared slit trenches, and arrangements were completed accordingly. Had it not been for this piece of foresight, it is quite possible that the massacre at Clark Field would have been great enough to cripple the field entirely for effective future operations. The absence of such trenches at Iba unquestionably contributed in a major degree to the great toll on the west coast. Nichols Field had been partially protected.

The photo reconnaissance mission to Formosa still was unaccomplished. On the morning of the 8th, a single aircraft finally had taken off from Clark to satisfy the acute need for exact terrain information. But engine trouble had forced its return before leaving Luzon. It landed at Clark amid fires and wreckage. On the 10th,

Lieutenant Connally took off. Halfway up Luzon he collided head on with an overwhelming force of Japanese pursuit planes, and was forced to take swift cloud cover. He returned. Other reconnaissance missions had been run by bomber planes around the perimeter of Luzon within the period.

There was something of the "India Rubber Man" about Major "Reg" Vance. Distinctly streamlined was his lank, long chassis, and loosely articulated were his joints. And just as his body was elastic in the looseness of his movements, so his capacity for friendship was ever flexible to receive each newcomer. Gentle, shy, and sincere was Major Vance, and to look once into his smiling blue eyes, couched within a web of radiating squint wrinkles, was to like him.

It was on one of those mornings when, wearied by the chaotic events of the night, he came into the office, and in a half-apologizing way said that he had been named to take over in Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell's place as acting Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2. It was an embarrassing moment for him. And his assignment was indeed difficult. He had hardly more than arrived from America when the war struck. Now he was being told to assume control of a complicated function that had been disrupted by the withdrawal of civilian personnel, the introduction of new people and the tremendous twenty-four-hour load imposed upon it. In characteristically halting manner he indicated his reluctance to disturb anything, and his hope that I would carry on exactly as before.

For "Reg" Vance I gladly would have acceded. But I was completely satiated with the arbitrary decisions from above that tossed in further changes at a time when our burdens were crushing—merely, so far as anyone could determine, to satisfy officialdom's requirement that an officer of field grade must occupy the section chief's post on a General Staff.

I replied that I would be of as much assistance as I could, but that I was making application for relief and transfer at the earliest opportunity. I knew that there was a welcome for me in Colonel George's organization—the Interceptor Command. He had made that plain.

And, in addition, Major LeGrand A. Diller, General MacArthur's chief aide and head of the Press Relations section of USAFFE, had indicated some time previously that I would be welcome there. During a telephone conversation with him that morning, I communicated something of my discouragement and asked if he would keep me in mind when I was satisfied that Major Vance could take over. In short, I asked him to "rescue" me.

And then, in the chaotic rush of great events focusing with inflexible direction on the road to Bataan, I forgot about that SOS call to Major Diller. I was to remember it with consternation very soon—on the very day when it became apparent that General Claggett would be unable to assume again the raking responsibilities of command under the conditions we found forced upon us, and that Colonel George would head the 5th Interceptor.

There had been few opportunities to visit General Claggett during those crazy days and nights. His new office had been established at the extreme end of the Interceptor Command and Air Warning Service wing of the building, across the court from my normal station.

But on this particular day I made it a point to drop in on him. He was studying a flight map. His complexion, still the unhealthy color of bread dough, did not agree with his robust words that he was well enough to resume active duty.

"I'm all right, young fellow," he insisted repeatedly. "But they won't take me off the sick list yet."

I sat beside his desk and studied him as he blew cigar smoke ceilingward. To his last day General Claggett never would retreat one inch; of that I felt certain. He was born a battler. But he was not well, nor would he ever be well again in the Philippines.

"General," I said, smiling, "this army needs what you've got. Why do you want to commit suicide?"

It was his turn to stare. His eyes blinked.

"And just what health resort would you suggest this season?" he growled.

"I've heard tell of Australia."

"So have I," he replied, and, with a roll of his eyes, added:

"Specifically, in fact. Supply command . . . Maybe they're right . . . Maybe they're right."

## *Midday Mauling*

Somewhere in my ragged consciousness the fact registers that we are almost at the end of my watch. It's nearly noon. I've been on duty since 4:00 A.M. I am dog-weary, and my mind receives each new sensation, each new addition to the endless flow of conflicting information reports from the provinces with a dull impact—like little pellets dropping on to a limp canvas square.

Nearly noon . . .

That means it's nearly raid time. They ought to be in about 12:17 today.

What does Air Warning say?

Yes, that's more like it . . . Fifty-four heavy bombers north of Cabanatuan, proceeding southwesterly.

Fifty-four! That will be a royal slapping, if they all come at once. Gratefully I turn the smoke-filled, paper-littered office over to Lieutenant Bell. I cross the court between the legs of Headquarters building V and enter the big room with its huge horizontal map table presided over by a circle of telephonists and their spotter assistants. The map . . . No need to ask; those little composition arrows being chivvied into position by the spotter tell the story plainly enough. A formidable force of enemy bombers is converging down the mid-line of Luzon with its slower elements bearing slightly toward Manila. Already the warning has been telephoned to all headquarters and to the civil defense units. In a momentary lull in the clatter and chatter of the big room, we hear the distant wailing of the Manila and Fort McKinley sirens.

There is a shrilling of whistles.

"All unnecessary personnel, evacuate the building," comes the shouted order, passed along the corridor.

With a resigned air, officers and men so classed—that is, those not actively required to conduct air warning and communications functions—slip into conveniently hung battle equipment and, tak-

ing gas masks and helmets, pile out of the doorway into the brilliant sunshine. Some go directly to the prepared slit trenches.

There is no confusion, no panic. Quickly we have become accustomed to this routine of meeting the unseen threat to our Headquarters and our lives. Since those first disastrous days we have learned to avoid the obvious points of shelter. No more do men run for the ditches alongside the airdrome road or those paralleling Makati Road, nor do we seek isolated clumps of trees. It's beastly hot, but the most secure camouflage against strafing is obtained by taking refuge in dried-out rice paddies, lying parallel to the little dikes, and burrowing one's way under the overhanging dry leaves left by the rice harvesters, and then lying perfectly still. I have my own particular warren about three hundred yards from the building, probably safe enough against strafing; but a near miss intended for the building—well, it could land three hundred yards away or fifty. You can outguess a bomb, but not until you see it leave the belly of the bomber—and that's difficult if you are lying well covered in an effort to identify yourself with the rest of the country.

I listened intently. Yes, there they are. That faint building up and diminishing of sound so characteristic of Japanese bomber squadrons. I burrow a little bit deeper into the paddy field; I can hear Corey and some of the other boys doing likewise.

The sun beats down like something alive, but except for this ominous drone slowly mounting in volume, there is no other thing alive in the world. The atmosphere has ceased to live. The air bears no hint of familiar movement of man or beast.

Then comes the distant clump of antiaircraft batteries feeling their range. After each detonation the distant droning seems to cease for a tiny fraction of a second, but always it resumes. There is no slackening of its hateful purpose or song. From several quarters the guns are hammering—Cavite, Fort Mills, probably, and now the closer smash of the battery on Makati Road.

Now the small white blossoms high up in the blue, but always disappointing. Always far behind the silvery toylike formations apparently so harmlessly approaching their objectives.

*F-f-fu-ut . . . f-f-fu-u-ut . . . f-f-fu-u-ut . . . f-f-fu-u-ut!*

Their distant softened explosions are ridiculously tiny and ineffectual.

But not the bombs their quarries drop. Now the thudding blows shake the earth. One, two—five—ten—and more and faster until the blasts merge into one rolling thunder of destruction.

Where is it? Close—but not immediate. Sounds like Nichols Field again.

The tremendous beat of sound hurtles through the air and strikes against one like a solid thing. The thundering detonations are interrupted only, as it seems, to allow the tortured atmosphere to collect itself before the next great confusion. Again and again this gigantic drum roll.

My fingers are clutching the hot dried earth and my teeth are set. It is not fear. One soon achieves a detachment from the fact of a bombing unless he himself is part of the objective. That another objective is being smashed, even if it may be close by, leaves one with a feeling of fatalistic isolation. A miss is not only as good as a mile but as good as many miles. This, of course, is predicated upon the condition that one also be not within concussion distance. Indeed, the terrible concussion accounts for far more human damage than the actual impact of fragments against warm, soft tissue. Rather, this is the reaction of a helpless sort of anger.

But now I jerk to a new sound: the rapidly rising crescendo of a single motor in a dive.

Then there are more than big bombers in this raid! Dive bombers, or fighters, also are participating, and this one is close.

I twist violently to try to get a view through the straw. Then stop abruptly. Motion like that not only will betray my hiding place but will endanger everyone concealed in this area.

"Lie still, you idiot," I charge myself furiously, and then add in unintended facetiousness, "or you'll die still!"

Now the whole world is filled with this bellowing thunder, punctuated sharply by the snapping of machine-gun and small-cannon fire.

Strafing . . . Ground seems to lift and suck upward toward this rushing fury.

Then my scalp contracts and I lie with paralyzed rigidity. I can

actually feel the cannon slugs stamping the earth like some giant riveter. They rip downward into the ground about us.

For one age-long second this stuttering line of invisible death beats toward me . . .

And passes me!

I am hot, wet, slippery with perspiration.

Now I am aware that I have been holding my breath. But I must breathe!

"Well, breathe then, you fool!" I hear myself shouting.

He must have seen us! . . . I'm going to get out of here . . . But I don't. Either he's made a quick wing over and is coming back or there is another one. I still think he can't see us, but he certainly will if any one of us gets up and tries to make a run for it.

Besides . . . run for what . . . where?

Again that sweeping roar with lead lacing the earth. But this time the pace is more leisurely, the shooting more deliberate. And why not? There is no opposition. From far off on the Makati Road I can hear a rising storm of rifle and machine-gun fire; but there is nothing here—and why should there be? Unorganized rifle shooting has but the slightest chance of registering even a harmless hit and infinitely small possibility of establishing a really crippling impact. But it does betray the location of ground personnel, and very likely that is exactly what this attack was designed to accomplish.

But they do accomplish more.

From my earthworm shelter I can see a pillar of black smoke rising swiftly. The Headquarters building? No, it is farther north than that. Then the hangar? My curiosity becomes the greater part of imprudence and I struggle out of my cover. I am just in time to see the last act of this murderous little drama. The column of black smoke tapers down to the last resting place of the "Royal Yacht." A Japanese strafing, which might be either a fighter or a 97 type of fighter-bomber—it is obscured by the smoke, and its outline will not classify in my mind—is just adding the *coup de grâce* to General Claggett's flaming Douglas command plane. She was a beautiful, gleaming piece of aircraft architecture. Now she makes a beautiful fire. My knees are weak, and I want to sit down. I do. Some-

how the death of that ship hits me as though she were a real living personality.

The attack is still proceeding over toward Nichols Field. Strafers and bombers are smashing the earth with everything they have.

But a change has come over me. What the hell . . . With foolhardy deliberateness I walk along the road and join the Makati highway. I'm tired, and I am going home to quarters. The all-clear sounds just as I reach the Carabao Gate.

For three hours I sleep as a dead man. But those hours are minutes to me, and I have just closed my eyes when the houseboy shakes me.

"Colonel George would like to see you at Headquarters as soon as you can," he explains. In that automatic, dull, but rapid way that has become so characteristic of our movements, I dress and leave the quarters. A hundred yards along the Circle Road I thumb a ride. As we leave the Carabao Gate my eye is drawn to the great pall of smoke rising from the vicinity of Nichols Field.

"Yes," says the driver, "they really chewed up the barrio of Baclaran. They must 'a' been lining up for the field; but they overshot it, and the town's a mess."

Beyond the aircraft battery we pass a truck piled high with crude wooden coffins. The driver nods toward them.

"Third load like that I've seen in the past two hours," he explains shortly. "The Nips didn't get much in the way of military personnel this time, but the civilians took an awful beating."

For the next two hours I am lost in the maze of aircraft warning data which Colonel George wishes to have compiled in the hope of predicting attacks from habits they may reveal. The sun is dropping low over the Bataan ranges when he comes toward me, followed by Captain Sprague.

"We must go to Nichols Field and locate the command posts of some of the squadrons," he states. "I'd like to have you come with me and help make general observations."

Half an hour later we are picking our way along debris-filled Taft Avenue Extension just northwest of Nichols Field. Already Filipino repair gangs and public service crews are toiling to clear wreckage and restore power supply. Here, however, damage is

scattered. It is the barrio that, in those repeated rains of fire and steel from the sky, has been converted into a shambles.

Here the streets are a litter of fallen wires, still smoking bomb craters, and endless rubble of smashed timber, poor furniture, and a tumbled miscellany of homely utensils—clothing and household equipment blasted far from their accustomed places.

Carefully we edge around a splintered carromata upside down, the rimless spokes of one wheel sticking out like spines. Beneath it a brass-bright harness encloses a pulpy mass from which warm steam arises.

The day is drawing to a close, and the light mercifully fades. But what is hidden here is brought into even more sinister revelation farther along where a bright flame, solid and straight, springs from a bomb-ruptured gas main. Here nothing remains of half a block of closely packed Filipino houses, except a tumbled sea of heat-twisted elephant-iron roofs brokenly covering a black depth of smoking ashes. And here there is a great gaping hole in the earth where once stood a small soft-drink stand. The crater contains nothing of the building, but at the bottom are one table intact and seven disorderly but unbroken chairs.

A military policeman waves us on and around a littered corner to the short street approaching Nichols Field. Only half the width of the bridge is still usable, and that creaks ominously under the car. The wreckage of the other half drops into the swamp water below.

We need no headlights, even if they were permissible. Bright flames from the gaunt but crumbling skeleton of the Philippine Air Depot show us the gaping pockmarks of bomb hits on the runways. Still, however, the damage here is relatively slight. What we can see is for the most part the product of that other and most disastrous raid on the 10th, when the enemy really won this air war by hitting Iba, Clark, and Nichols at the same time.

From this terrific onslaught, the corpses of airplanes still lie in various positions on the field. Some look natural and quite flyable. Others obviously are smashed beyond repair by machine-gun fire and bomb fragments. Here, one slumps despondently on its belly, its propeller curled out in front like the rigid feelers of a dead

insect. A line of ragged holes along its entire flank shows where enemy machine-gun bullets crashed through in a ripping hail. Near it a plane stands completely isolated in a ring of bomb craters; but it has no visible wound. Its sleek dark shape is pitted sharply against the memory of a vast tropical sunset, joined at the horizon by the dancing flames of the burning depot.

Now we are driving northward along the very slightly damaged runway just constructed at such great cost and after so many months of garrulous wrangling and bitter effort. How tiny and stupid it all seems now!

Beyond a churned-up ridge of mud, higher than the car, we find the command post of one bombed-out squadron. Earth-caked figures grin apelike out of the darkness of their dugout. They tell a hilarious story of a machine gunner in a sandbagged defense point whose gun shield was hit by a splinter in such a manner as to spin the gun around and fetch him a punishing blow before he could duck. And he so angry that, with one stroke of a trench spade, he knocked the offending weapon out of its own gunpit.

We thread our way over a deep debris-pitted field, past the forlorn line of the remaining hangars.

A sentry leaps out of the gathering dusk and flags us down. Almost at the same instant there is a sharp explosion directly ahead.

"Sorry, sir, didn't see you coming in time to give you better warning," he explains hoarsely. "They're blasting little holes in the runway to place demolition charges so they can send 'er up right."

"Is it safe to go on now?" asked the Colonel.

"Will be." And from his rifle the sentry fires two quick shots into the air.

Now we are at the rear of the hangar lines. This once trim area is a mass of wreckage. At one point I see quick tongues of flame licking redly in the heart of a dark structure. I look again, but apparently the fire is gone.

We make the best use of the failing daylight to get out into the bundoc where we may find another command post—if we are lucky. I believe it's the 3rd Pursuit Squadron this time.

Out of the gloom a voice startles us. A machine gunner asks di-

rections to a first-aid station in order to summon help for his comrade, fallen desperately ill in his mud-and-sand defense post on the mosquito-infested bank of the river swamp. We give the directions and bump on. Darkness falls like a solid thing, and we feel our way at a child's pace.

Out of the blackness thumps sudden sound. We stop. And shout . . . A huge moving shape lurches to a halt immediately before us. Tiny blue lights blink. It is a great six-wheel truck hammering its way back to the ruined field for some hidden provisions for the men in the bundoc. Cautiously we edge around and continue into the black nothingness.

Voices again. We shout an inquiry—and get a vague direction. Too vague. But another hundred yards brings unexpected help. The whole sky lights suddenly. In that moment we see pale buildings off to the left. These mark our point of departure from this so-called road. We stop the car and get out. Then look back the way we have come for an explanation of the light.

That licking tongue of flame has not died. Instead, it has found food and now leaps high into the sky. The quivering smoke cloud far above it gives us pale guidance.

"You stay here with the car and a torch," directs Colonel George. "Keep your ears peeled, and if you hear a shout, direct us back here."

They are gone. The driver also dissolves in the darkness. The night is intensely silent, and small sounds carry far. I can hear tiny crackles under that flame-lighted smoke cloud. Occasionally a faint shout. Far off near Fort McKinley I can hear great trucks coming closer. In the heavens Venus shines in such unhampered radiance that in moments when the distant fire burns low, I actually cast a shadow as I pace slowly beside the black bulk of the car. It is two full hours before their voices carry softly toward me in the night. Cautiously I blink the torch and hear their acknowledgment. They are still a considerable distance away, and before they arrive another figure stumbles toward me. He is an aircraft mechanic, filthy, tired and worn—and thirsty. He drains my canteen and lurches off in the direction of a hidden command post.

Slowly we feel our way through the back country to Fort McKinley, still helped by the stars and the pulsing light from burning Nichols Field.

### *"War's Closing Fingers"*

Rain . . . Rain . . . Rain . . .

The black nights oozed warmish moisture from emptying, unseen clouds. The sheet-iron roofs drummed with it. The shrubs wept with it. The earth underfoot sprung soggily or washed in slime with it.

Night after night . . .

How did it affect our destiny? Did it hinder the invader? Did it hinder our heterogeneous American and Filipino army floundering in the ravines of La Union, Tarlac, and Benguet, or lying in the steaming beach lands of Lingayen? Would it flood the plains of Apayao and Cagayan and permit the distracted defenders to reorganize and trap the advanced armored units of the enemy debouching from Aparri?

We did not know.

But in one vital respect this unseasonable late spilling of the heavens did affect the immediate progress of the war. If the Japanese planned any extensive night air operations, their intentions had to be abandoned. Our own planes caught aloft after dark made heavy work of it, and at least one B-17 was lost when it failed to locate the field at Del Monte in the black wetness and, in an attempt to reach Zamboanga, ran its tanks dry and pitched into the sea four miles offshore. This was Lieutenant Montgomery's plane. Previously he had made a successful attack against a transport at Aparri. His ill-fated bomber had far more than earned her keep.

On Luzon, after-dark pilots had some unexpected—and thoroughly unwanted—aids.

Captain Sprague stomped into quarters at dinnertime. He'd run an emergency reconnaissance to Lingayen.

"Those damn' fires lit me all the way down," he growled savagely, pitching his wet clothes into a sodden pile and making for the shower room with its bathtub ever filled with water for emergency use should an enemy air attack put our normal water supply out of action, or flames threaten the quarters. "They must have listened for the motor and, whenever they'd hear it, they'd light a fire. I'd no more than pass that one, when another would spring up further on."

Bud hissed the cleansing water over him and rubbed down hard.

"Then, just when I thought I'd check my course to be sure they hadn't misled me somehow, I realized I didn't have to check it. Hell! Manila was all lit up like a Christmas tree . . . Flares . . . Flares . . . Flares! Red, yellow, and what have you. They were firing them from every point of town . . . Pasay, Pandacan, Malate, Ermita, the port area—even Intramuros!"

At that moment the telephone jangled. It was from Air Force headquarters.

"There've been six rockets in the past half-hour around here," said the voice. "We can't find a thing, either."

I hung up. Helplessness . . . Helplessness!

At that instant a rifle shot close by made us both jump.

The bells shrilled again.

"This is the Provost Marshal," came the announcement over the wire. "Someone just shot a rocket from the rear of your quarters. The guard fired. But there's no one around."

Bud's jaw muscles bunched. We stared into each other's eyes. And both knew what we read there.

"Yeah," he said grimly. "Makes you want to run and hide, or something, don't it?" Then he laughed. "Like kids scared of the dark!"

He was right.

But the laugh cleared the air as a shaft of sunlight might have done.

"It's a helluva night to play with firecrackers!" he chuckled. "Let's have some soup."

We entertained high suspicions that the Japanese cared little for the state of the wind, and now we were to discover that he easily could bear the weather.

Came a flurry of alarming messages from the sensitive area of the Camarines—the trailing eastward tail of southern Luzon. Here at the base of beautiful Mount Mayon was the municipality of Legaspi, for years a haven for a considerable Japanese population. In fact, the provinces of Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur, a few miles away, were well—and strategically—supplied with those who would welcome military visitors from the north.

An initial reconnaissance by B-17's was carried out high over Legaspi as early as December 13, although fighters had included the Camarines in swift sweeps long before the beginning of the war. What the 17's found made us take another hitch in our belts. Another invasion point . . . And one which threatened to close the San Bernardino Straits, sea life line between Manila and Honolulu.

Under cover of foul weather, the beach head had been established. It was a *fait accompli*. Transports already were in the harbor. An enemy aircraft carrier was spotted.

The worst in the sudden flood of panicky messages from the southeast was verified. Hitting hard with a force of perfectly trained and equipped men, the Japanese had swept the demoralized defenders before them: defenders who were in possession of a peaceful, apparently friendly community one moment, and the next—hostility, treachery, and betrayal everywhere, even as the assault from the rain-hidden sea took form against them.

Came next a foreboding thinning out of message traffic from Legaspi. Finally, only one telephone truck still reported; an isolated post advantageously placed for observation, but relatively secure from detection. Public buildings were being occupied with swiftness and dispatch by the heavily armed invader. Fifth Columnists emerged from their civil camouflage on every hand. The slightest resistance of Filipino civilians was met with the immediate and final settlement of a burst from a sub-machine gun. Communications centers, water supply points, the powerhouse, and municipal government offices were clamped around by a military vise. Then

food centers, the hospitals, hotels, schools, and finally such private homes as were needed.

The following day, Lieutenants Connally, Ford, Vandevanter, Coates, Wheless, and Adams were dispatched from Del Monte to bomb shipping in the harbor. But the jinx of mechanical failures due to prolonged lack of maintenance of hard-used machines reared itself constantly now, and while one B-17 barely avoided tragedy from a tire blown on the take-off, two others were forced by failing engines to return to Del Monte shortly after getting onto the route.

Lieutenant Wheless lost the formation in the murk. He made a single attack against the transports he found at Legaspi. But while on a bombing run he was beset by no fewer than eighteen enemy fighters. Both Japanese Zero and German Messerschmitt types flew into them in vicious unrelenting attacks. One crew member was killed outright. Two others were seriously wounded. The plane opened daylight in scores of places where machine-gun and cannon fire ripped through. But four of her tormentors plunged earthward through the mist, their own smoke adding to the opacity. The great wounded bird struggled to maintain her altitude and speed. She tried every trick of evasion known to the trade. Finally she eluded the last of them and made a desperate attempt to regain home. At least she regained friendly territory . . . An emergency field . . . Down . . . Down . . .

The field was barricaded!

No matter. She could not remain aloft another minute. She crash-landed, her running gear useless. The wounded were hospitalized at Cagayan, Mindanao.

Lieutenants Adams and Vandevanter attacked the transports at Legaspi. Adams had just completed the dropping of his load, when six enemy fighters screamed out of the clouds. Almost at once one engine went dead, badly hit. And then the second. The controls were flabby. The big plane was riddled and rapidly becoming unmanageable. It was no use. She'd never get home. And so the day claimed another of the precious B-17's. Her crew was saved. She crashed on Masbate Island. Lieutenant Vandevanter almost bagged a transport. Enemy pursuit were sighted on the

return. But this lone voyager made home. The situation had become almost as desperate for the bombers on Mindanao as for the fighters on Luzon.

Whether the bombers were utilized to the best possible advantage is another of those questions that must be left for the findings of history. Was there a coordinated operational policy or plan? Was it fallacious to employ single B-17's—or even two or three or four—on bombing missions? Should they have been used in entire squadrons, and fought as squadrons?

At any rate, on December 17 General Brereton declared to General MacArthur that in his opinion the situation had become untenable from the air standpoint, and that he proposed to remove the remaining bombers and a small, selected staff to Australia, there to continue to fight against the invaders of the Philippines. General MacArthur, with one grim eye on the record so far, and his ears still ringing from the report of the costly Legaspi raid, agreed that it might be as well. There were no further operations of importance by B-17's based on the Philippines.

And thus quickly was turned another black page of history.

The fright of a threatened paratroop attack (I never learned the source of that false report), the complete lack of suitable bomb shelters, plus the serious deficiencies in housing and messing the personnel after the destruction of Nichols Field barracks, indicated with increasing pressure the desirability of shifting Headquarters to Fort McKinley.

And so, in the black heart of a night so devoid of light that sheer guesswork and a previous knowledge of every concealed foot of the roadway were the sole factors responsible for the continued creeping progress of the burdened trucks, we engaged upon the first of those moves which were destined to end high up on the ridge of the Bataan mountains.

Only the Air Warning Service was to remain at Nielson a few days—until the fatigue-beaten but never complaining Major Lamb and his staff of loyal assistants could install sufficient emergency lines at McKinley to serve its multiple needs.

The main Headquarters was housed in the Officers' Club build-

ing on the ridge. Into the heart of the ridge, far beneath, the sappers still were driving the tunnels designed ultimately to house all the vital operational functions. In the meantime, the tunnels through their several entries to the surface—one of them at the Club entrance—could serve admirably as bomb-proof for personnel and records.

The 5th Interceptor Command would go into Quarters No. 28, just a few doors away on the main circle road of the Post.

Goodbye, Nielson of hectic, indelible memory.

Prior to the raid, I had occasion to go to Nichols Field. It was imperative to locate a roll of aviation strip maps we had sent over from the G-2 office not so long before—and yet, years before—it all depended on your mood and thoughts of the moment. Driving erratically to avoid embarrassing entanglements with snarls of power and communication wires, blankets of glass, rubble of stone, and occasionally a splintered timber, I managed to pilot the car—an abused commandeered Ford with an engine smoother than anything I had ever heard in a pampered peacetime car—eventually to the wreckage of the Operations Office.

For a moment I sat there viewing the deserted scene and contrasting it vividly in my mind with the picture of that heat-bathed May morning when I had paid my first visit to Nichols Field, in company with General Claggett and Colonel George. I recalled the row of sleek P-35's lined up—just there. (You could have lost one in the bomb crater that existed "just there" at this moment.) Off-duty crews had been huddled in the shade of the corrugated iron porch—just there. The porch—just where it was now was indeed a mystery, for not a vestige of the structure was recognizable. The place made you think of an old friend who had just shaved his mustache. Somehow naked. I left the car and pushed aside what was left of a shattered screen door.

How different from that Operations Office of a few months ago. Then it was crowded with busy personnel—some hot, some perspiring, but all busy. Maybe the General's being there had something to do with it, but, anyway, they were busy.

The ghosts of their presence faded from my vision, and in their stead stood the skeleton of a desk, an upturned table with two broken legs and another table with a corner completely blown off but the contents of a drawer beneath the ruptured top still neatly arranged and undisturbed. Wrapped around the beam that had fallen from the second floor control tower was a braided electric light cord, and dangling from its end a shade so mangled as to be almost inverted. But the thin brittle glass bulb was unscathed. The other end of the wire terminated stiffly in mid-air, the bright copper strands testifying to the viciousness of the jerk which had separated this terminal end from the ceiling fixture.

Underfoot, the sharp snapping of glass accompanied every step. Papers and torn bits of clothing kept company with battered pieces of office equipment and abandoned military gear.

Behind an overturned bookcase, almost indistinguishable from the general rubble in that corner of the room, I found the roll of maps. Except for dirt smudges and one shallow gash across the end, it was undamaged. I shouldered it and, leaving the grim somberness of the Operations Office behind, dropped it into the car and turned about.

In vain I looked for the Headquarters building. It had been burned to the concrete foundation blocks.

Along my own mid-line there was a tight uneasy sensation. I had had enough. I looked at my watch. It was about time for a raid, anyway. That little spasmodic jerk continued as I left Nichols Field. I thought I was going to be sick.

But suddenly there came a sound that gave strength to my anticipation of trouble and made me forget sickness. From the bay side came the unmistakable unrhythymical beat of Japanese motors high in the air. Almost at the same instant the earth thudded to repeated hammer blows. And again! Then came the sirens.

The planes had been flying over central Luzon and the China Sea all morning; but their exact intent was impossible to predict, because their tracks wove and twisted and doubled back in baffling confusion. It was just another wily trick, for suddenly, apparently by radio direction, these birds of prey turned from every point of the compass and whipped in upon the city in the coordinated,

deadly precise attack. The bombs were the first warning. This time the sirens were superfluous, for already the population was rushing into shelters.

With easy disdain for the very ineffectual puffs of the obsolete A.A. guns on Makati Road the Japanese wheeled lazily. I had stopped the car at the side of the cut-off between Nichols and Makati Road.

It will be Fort McKinley this time, I said to myself. Maybe it is just as well I took this little jaunt to Nichols Field, because I should not have had sense enough to shelter in the tunnel.

With lofty dignity the familiar two-engined bombers eased their way farther east, then made a wide turn to the north. I waited for the thumps that would tell of punishment to the hitherto unbound Fort McKinley. But they did not come.

Why were they saving McKinley? . . . Maybe because they expected to use it themselves later!

I got into the car again and drove eastward. Then I felt it—a rolling series of heavy detonations. Quickly I endeavored to orient the point of attack. Zablan Field! Headquarters of the Philippines Army Air Corps. I was to learn that the stick of bombs, heavy enough to hurl the hangars to the heavens, happened to be inaccurately placed through miscalculation of the strength of the east wind.

At the time of the attack, a group of Filipino pilots had been listening while one of them read a magazine article entitled "Japan's Bush League Air Force"—stupid tommyrot, reeking with inaccuracy, conceit, and wishful thinking, of the type with which the American public had been stuffed for years, and exactly the kind of stuff Tokyo intended us to assimilate. Even though that stick was badly placed, the concussion flung the whole party about like straws in a tornado. One was dead. Three were unconscious. A survivor grimly remarked that if these were bush leaguers, he was not issuing an invitation to the professionals.

Later in the afternoon I went in to South Manila with Bud Sprague. He did not expect to return before the blackout, and apprehending its uneasy sentries with itching trigger fingers, I decided to walk back to Fort McKinley. But I had not gone more

than a third of the way when I realized that darkness would catch me far short of the post. From the rear there came the sound of an approaching car. I turned. It was a military car. Unashamed, I made use of my begging thumb. The car drew up, and a voice hailed me.

"Well, and how would you call that!" it said cheerily. "The one man in all Manila that I am looking for, and he asks me for a ride! Get in, fellow!" It was Major Nichols. Nick!

"You were looking for me?" I asked incredulously.

His head nodded in that little jerky way so characteristic of him. "Yup. I sure was. I have just come from USAFFE. Colonel Diller told me to tell you that General Sutherland has approved his request that you report to Press Relations Section of G.H.Q. first thing in the morning."

My mouth fell open. "But," I began to remonstrate, "that cannot be—Colonel George."

"Yes, I know," interrupted Nick, "but apparently Diller is in a tough spot. They are working a twenty-four-hour shift, almost continuously, and they cannot keep it up. They have got to have help, and it will be a fine job: you are headed for the post of Chief Press Censor."

My feelings were very mixed. It was a compliment to be chosen for such important work, although I felt certain that Nick was mistaken. I might be approved for press censorship work, but hardly as head of the Press Censor Section.

"But Colonel George—" I began again.

Nick's birdlike nod came again. "Yes, I know that's tough. But I am afraid you are really hooked this time. Colonel Diller was saying that he needed a trained newspaperman, that he wanted you but did not know whether Colonel George would release you. At that moment General Sutherland stepped in and questioned him. Satisfied that Diller's need was a real one, he said: 'Tell Ind to report. I am sorry to do this to Colonel George, but I have no choice. He will understand.'" Nick paused a moment. "I was asked to deliver that message to you without fail tonight."

Blackness, heavy and hot, had settled over the unrelieved Philippine countryside. When we arrived at McKinley, I thanked him, said goodbye, and with a sick feeling for the second time that

day I made my way through the blackness to Quarters 48 and Colonel George.

Tired and worn, he was emerging from a shower bath, chatting earnestly with Lefty Eads.

"Hello there, boy!" he greeted warmly. "How's the war?"

"I don't know. Not so good, I am afraid. It's been nice knowing you fellows," I said, feeling a tightness in my throat, "but—I am leaving you."

"Leaving us?"

"Yes, I am approved for USAFFE—Press Relations."

For a moment there was a deep silence. Then Colonel George jumped forward and seized my hand. "Congratulations! You know how I feel about seeing you go, but I certainly won't stand in your way when you get a call from G.H.Q." He added, tightening his grip: "Congratulations on another score, too."

Puzzled, it was my turn to stare.

"What—"

"On not going to Australia," he said warmly.

How he knew it, I never found out.

## USAFFE Interlude

I have taken the veil. I am installed in an ancient building at the corner of Victoria and Santa Lucia. Old-timers who remember something of the ancient, picturesque streets of the walled city at once will place this address, for "No. 1 Victoria" is adjacent to us; in fact, "No. 1," the venerable headquarters of General Douglas MacArthur in his days as Military Adviser to the Commonwealth, remains the bull's-eye of military activity in these more recent and troublous days. It is but a run up the well worn stone steps outside to the busy offices of Headquarters, United States Army Forces in the Far East.

Lieutenant Colonel Diller, aide to the General and head of Press Relations, still retains his office at the head of the stairs; but the tremendous expansion of press correspondent activities with the onset of war has literally burst the limits of the quarters. There-

fore, we now find ourselves installed in the ancient monastery and school of the Order of the Virgin Mary.

Downstairs are Captain Sauer and Major Carlos Romulo. This outstanding Philippine journalist is the personification of energy and prolificness. From his clattering typewriter has poured an endless stream of inspiration to strengthen his people. He had no illusions concerning the Japanese. He saw them as they were, not as the white man preferred to see them. He uncovered their bland smiles and bared the real intent of their ingratiating mannerisms. He toured their country and those of the neighboring victims-to-be. And he told the truth of what he saw and what he was convinced would come to pass all too soon. He minced no words, even about Malaya and Singapore. And he promptly was labeled a sensational journalistic scandalmonger of international proportions. With the Japanese gun nearly stuck down our throats, we still preferred to call it a piece of stick candy, a sweet gesture of Nipponese good will intended to please us and nourish our white bodies.

Now the blow has fallen.

No longer is he a yellow journalist stirring up international hates. Now he is the living symbol of Outraged Truth. And we rise in indignation to brand the Japanese action as a cowardly stab in the dark, a treacherous flashing of slavering teeth from a suddenly disappearing smile of traitorous friendship. Major Carlos Romulo can appreciate the application of the truth that there are none so blind as they who will not see. But he is too warm, too genuinely human to speak of it.

Yesterday, he was a yellow journalist.

Today, he is the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in Journalism.  
Both for the same piece of writing!

I have the night watch tonight from twelve o'clock to eight. The night-watch officer performs this duty in Colonel Diller's office. I am glad for that. This ancient rambling structure may breed uncongenial thoughts in the long dark hours, while in the main headquarters upstairs a skeleton staff embracing all sections is on duty all night.

I went home early today to snatch a bath and a little sleep. Now it is time to start the long hazardous trek through the absolutely black night from Fort McKinley to Fort Santiago. The driver flashes his torch once to guide me to the car, completely invisible in the all-pervading blackness. But the quick eye of a sentry has seen the momentary flash.

"Halt!" The startled voice in turn startles us. I freeze in my steps. These Filipino sentries have itchy trigger fingers, and when they challenge they don't mean "Please." From beneath a cluster of bushes to the left the dazzling point of a torch catches me full on. This sentry has learned his lesson well. Now his voice comes to one side of the light, and, had I been an enemy and had I quickly fired at the light as a bull's-eye, I should not have struck his body at all.

"Pass, sir," he says, and I do.

Our drivers have developed the night eyes of the lynx. Under the trees lining the circle road to the Carabao Gate, the night is so black that I frankly have no idea exactly where the ground lies beneath me, to say nothing of the curves of the road ahead. Yet this lad slips the car into low gear and with his head out of the open window puts us safely but slowly along our route. We are permitted only the tiny blue lamps useful to mark the approach of an opposing vehicle when it is close on, but totally inadequate for illuminating a road even a few feet ahead. Now he slows down and feels his way toward the gate. Again the sharp challenge and the quick search of an inquiring torch.

We are out on Makati Road; but our progress is snaillike, for without warning the air is filled with the throb of motors, the calls of subdued voices, and pale blue lights glide past in ghostlike procession. It is a convoy moving by night. Repeatedly we are stopped for long periods while military police try to unsnarl this doubly troublesome traffic. At length we leave the congested area behind and make fair pace down the familiar road past Nielson Field where three tiny chinks of light betray to me the location of the building I know so well. I picture its stifling smoke-filled rooms and the exhausted men lying wherever opportunity offers for a snatch of rest, while those on duty try with bleared heavy

eyes to make sense out of it all. My driver knows the various sentry posts and takes no chances.

Now we are bumping along the still uncompleted cut-off road entering bomb-damaged Pasay. My head is extended out the window, too; not that I believe I can be of any assistance to the driver, for I am proposing to lend him my ears, not my eyes. The Filipino civil guards are soft-spoken in their commands to halt, but their rifles speak loudly and dangerously. But even our two pairs of ears are of no avail, for suddenly the night is blasted by the discharge of a rifle almost alongside, and the flash momentarily blinds us. We stop instantly, and I leap out, my fretted nerves making me insensible to the danger my precipitous action invites.

"What do you mean firing at us without a challenge?" I demand of no one in particular, since I can see only darkness.

There is no answer. I snap my own torch into a void before me, then sweep it in a quick arc. There is no one there. I swallow nervously and turn the shaded torch on to the car. A .30-caliber slug has drilled a neat hole in the top of the body over the rear side window, and going out of the top has whined away into the same mysterious darkness that brought it.

"He musta aimed at us," decides the driver laconically. And we go forward at an even more reduced pace. Six times from Pasay on down Manila Boulevard to the Intramuros Gate we are challenged and halted. The last time, inquiring searchlights cover every square foot of the interior of the car, and I must produce identification.

My watch is a quiet one. Only two official telephone calls come in: one from the still puzzling quiet Lingayen area, and one from the south. They need ammunition down at Mindoro. There are only a few rounds per man, and if the enemy makes anything like a serious attempt our people cannot possibly hold. The call really is not intended for me, so I pass it on to the General Staff people in the big room on the other side of the corridor.

Short, swarthy, and very purposeful, Carl Mydans of *Time* and *Life*, whose war photographs the world around have made him a top fighter, plans to make a quick run up the central line toward the advancing Japanese who landed at Aparri. And Melville

Jacoby and his bride-wife also are applying for a pass to do the same thing. The preliminary landings around Lingayen also will be covered. I hope they make it. Maybe we could get a better picture ourselves of what's going on. Certainly there have been landings in a number of spots; but, as yet, we must believe that at least half and maybe many more of the daily reports from the scattered provinces, describing Japanese concentrations taking over as they land from warships and transports, are unintentional mistakes, faulty observing, or just plain fifth-column false messages. It's unreal! Reports, reports everywhere. But so few real Japanese. How long will this phase last?

Brilliant tropical sunshine flooded the streets of this ancient walled city from flawless blue skies this morning. Yet out of this perfection come our enemies. And the time of their coming means new trouble for us.

Hitherto, the raids have been quite predictable—they arrived about noon. Apparently these fleets, loaded with death and chaos, take off from Formosa in the early morning. Arriving at noon, they unload, and methodically begin the return trip in order to land before late afternoon.

But early today the wide-eyed alarm of the sirens chased all other sounds from the streets.

Moment by moment the city dies into that unreal silence, a breathless waiting for the first faint drone of the bombers. Again I sense that all familiar inner excitement. If I only had something to eat! But I've just had breakfast. Still, I'm suddenly hungry.

Now they're coming. We stand under the massive arch of our main doorway and watch them. Beside us, the gunners of the .50-caliber machine gun enclosed in the sandbag emplacement at the corner of the building thread a belt and make ready. But there is no need for that. This formation is at least 20,000 feet high. There they are, unhurried and, alas, unharried, their motors thrumming a sinister song of hate.

Now the morning atmosphere swirls into thudding eruptions of sound. Again and again. Six . . . a dozen of them . . . The anti-

aircraft guns. The startled air again subsides into the low monotone of the motors.

The age-long wait . . .

Then small white clusters high up in the blue. It has been this way ever since the first day of the war. The bursts are behind the formations and below them.

Our enemies do not alter course. There is no need. The disappointing puffs always dot the blue as harmlessly as they look, and the gun crews apparently persist in trying to "chase" their targets. Now they are over Nichols Field.

*F-f-f-fu-u-ut . . . F-f-f-fu-u-ut . . . F-f-f-fu-u-ut . . . F-f-f-fu-ut.*

The explosions, distance-softened, sound like baby slaps on the wrist.

But not so the bombs their unscratched quarries drop.

*Caru-um-m-m-mp . . . Caru-um-m-mp . . . Caru-u-UM-M-MP!*

The chest muscles pinion the lungs and hold them motionless until the trembling din ceases as suddenly as it came. I am conscious of an unpleasant dampness from perspiration over my body, and my muscles are aching from tightly clamped jaws. I hear myself muttering through my teeth.

Unscathed, the enemy takes his departure, droning back through the same flawless blue that brought him.

But where the bombers were, the air is no longer blue. The apex of their journey is marked by a pylon of swiftly growing smoke. Comes the wail of a siren again. But this time thin and high. Ambulances. Followed by busses and several sedans. Wide-eyed faces, running with blood, peer out of them. Sometimes their owners make no effort to stem the red flood. They've been shocked into a staring anesthesia. They feel no pain. See nothing. But they bleed. How many were left back there under the rubble when badly aimed bombs whipped their houses into swirls of dust and leaping fire, no one really knows. Most of the civilians had heeded the order to evacuate all areas within many blocks of possible military targets, like Nichols Field. But some did not go. How many, we shall not know soon. For even some of those who live will only stare and shake their poor heads when you try to question them about their loved ones.

## *Invasion*

Here it comes!

There is a hushed tightness pervading every corner of USAFFE. Staff officers take quick, deep breaths. And they don't speak. There's a set expression around mouth and eyes. Endlessly the coders work on the stream of outgoing messages by which new troop movements will be effected. The situation maps are being altered to bring into position a new area. And suddenly new, terribly fateful significance is given to the name—Lingayen Gulf.

For the eleven o'clock press conference a release is being prepared that will tell the story in three typewritten lines; the fate of the Philippines is being encompassed in two sentences:

There was sighted this morning off Lingayen a huge enemy fleet estimated at eighty transports. Undoubtedly this is a major expeditionary drive being aimed at the Philippines.

That was all. That was enough.

Everyone from the Press Section has departed for Military Plaza, where General MacArthur is to present medals to Captain J. A. Villamor of the Philippine Army Air Force, and Lieutenant Jack Dale of our own outfit. General MacArthur has forbidden any interference with this, our first decoration ceremony.

To Captain Villamor goes the Distinguished Service Cross for his unbelievable courage in leading his tiny squadron of five antiquated P-26's against a raiding flight of fifty-four Japanese bombers over Batangas. Outgunned several hundred to one, this intrepid little group was joined by a sixth P-26, and together they drilled for altitude straight into the heart of their gigantic enemy. Each with two .30-caliber machine guns available to him, the pilots had worked into position for their first burst when protecting Zeros swept down upon them from the cloud heights far above the altitude to which the P-26 could climb. The others were forced to break off. But not before their bullets had found a bomber and forced him to drop away, apparently fatally hurt.

Bright-eyed Lieutenant Dale's life had almost been despaired of

in November, when he spun in at Nichols Field. With the resiliency of youth, he cheated death and, when hardly recovered, drove his P-40 into the thick of it and mercilessly strafed the invading enemy at Vigan. The same medal is awarded to him.

At the presentation ceremony the General says:

"It gives me great pleasure to pin these decorations upon your breasts, where for all eyes and for all time they will be the outward symbol of the devotion, the fortitude, and the courage with which you have fought for your country. It is my profound sorrow that Colin Kelly is not here. I do not know the dignity of Captain Kelly's birth, but I do know the glory of his death. He died unquestioning, uncomplaining, with a faith in his heart and victory his end. God has taken him unto himself, a gallant soldier who did his duty."

It is good that we can pause at a time of unparalleled threat to our existence long enough to recognize those pinnacles to which the human being aspires and achieves. There are some who believe that possibly we are being melodramatic in the face of our doom. But my native cynicism does not carry me in that direction. General MacArthur has given us all a little jolt of confidence in this black hour. How black, few here even suspect.

Then the eleven o'clock conference. And that fate-charged announcement.

Those fateful words of the communiqué are small enough, just the usual pica size. But the headlines that darken the streets wherever howling newsboys dart with their evil messages are not small. The largest in the case, this time. And they do not minimize. I wonder how the population will take it. Will there be panic?

I go to the door and make a local reconnaissance. Everywhere Filipinos are playing their eyes over the scare heads and the bold-faced stories under almost as sensational deck heads. They are serious. Few words are spoken, either to us or to other Filipinos. Several stand on the opposite sidewalk with their backs against the walls of the Cuartel Español of the now almost deserted barracks of the 31st Infantry, long since gone into battle stations. They fix us with unwavering glances, as though seeking some answer to this grotesque, overpowering threat. The eyes of the

Filipinos are on the white man. The eyes of the brown race, so long led by the white race, look to it now for answer.

And we have no answer. The white men have spoken their piece in the Far East. They have had their hour upon the stage. It started auspiciously enough. And strong hearts among them carried it on and builded well upon firm foundations. But others came who were of softer stuff. There has been much good. There has been some sound and fury. How much will signify? The little brown men across the street look to us with unspoken appeal for the answer.

And we have no answer.

Half an hour later I put the question of my own disposal squarely to Lieutenant Colonel Diller.

"With this large-scale invasion a certainty, surely we will abandon our plans for a greatly expanded press censorship section," I say, searching his tired face.

He is silent for a long time. Then he nods.

"Yes, I don't think there is any doubt of that."

"In that case, sir—I—" I flounder for words. I do not want to abandon him if he really needs me, but . . .

"In that case, you'd like to return to your Colonel George and the Air Force," he mercifully finishes for me. He is weary, but he is smiling; and I know it is all right.

I nod. "If it won't be letting you down."

"It's quite all right," he agrees. "Instead of expansion, it would appear that we'd better be looking to save what we have. And in that case, and with this very grave turn of things, maybe you can be of even greater assistance to Colonel George."

A few minutes later I hear the Colonel's voice on the telephone in response to my call. I acquaint him with Colonel Diller's permission, provided I can be really of some use to the Fifth Interceptor Command.

"How soon will you be out?" is Colonel George's answer.

"I'm practically passing the Carabao Gate now."

## *Home*

Familiar haunts again. Converted Quarters No. 28, the headquarters of the Fifth Interceptor Command.

The Colonel grinned and winked.

"Your desk and your gang are waiting for you," he said. "Somehow the war just isn't the same without you around here to make it worse."

I thanked him cordially and greeted my faithfuls again: now all things seemed to fit together once more. My never failing American-Filipino secretary with one of her characteristic half-boisterous greetings placed a load of work before me, and we were off.

A few moments later I heard my name softly spoken by a familiar voice. I looked up, and in consternation arose quickly, for there was little familiar about the face into which I looked.

"Buzz Wagner!" My eyes riveted upon the score of little bleeding punctures over the cheeks, chin, and forehead of our ace fighter pilot. Then I noted that he still wore his dark goggles, although he was inside the house. "Your eyes, too?" I asked anxiously.

He nodded. "Yes, I'm afraid they nicked me there, too. But it's not serious."

Now all of us were gathered around him. Anything, serious or not, that affected Lieutenant "Buzz" Wagner was a matter of concern to the Fifth Interceptor Command. There were plenty of lads who were doing their bit and doing their best while at it. But the supply of pilots who displayed those characteristics of a "natural" indeed was slim. There were Buzz, Bud Sprague, "Ed" Dyess, "Joe" Moore, "Hank" Thorne, Nathaniel Blanton, Marshall Anderson . . . There were others, too. But so few, really. And out in front of our tiny family was Buzz.

"Explosive bullet," explained Buzz, blinking. And we could see that there was real damage to at least one eye. "Over Vigan. They put several holes here and there in the old bird, but none very close. Then, just when it seemed everything was going to be all right, this hot one came through the windscreen. Just sorta took

the whole screen away with it. Lots of glass splinters," he added significantly. "Seemed like the thing burst right in my face. Lucky, don't you think?"

Yes, and no. If ever a bullet had the Wagner name on it, it was that one. But maybe the spelling was wrong, or something. Still, it was plain that Buzz's fighting days were over for a while. And how badly we needed him!

But Lieutenant Wagner, deceptively slow and deliberate in his actions, was urged constantly from within by forces which would not allow him to let down. Barred from flying, he nevertheless occupied every possible hour with studies, considerations, and thoughtfully presented recommendations, which never fell upon indifferent ears as far as Colonel George was concerned. Here was a common meeting of minds, a mutual admiration for the characteristics and abilities that made them both leaders in their fields. At the suggestion of Captain "Ossie" Lunde, a pilots' seminar was held in which each man was invited to outline his experiences, his findings and convictions. In this, Buzz's observations were invaluable for the instruction of new pilots.

It was at this time that the first of a series of recommendations concerning the immediate alteration of a number of obvious defects in design or manufacture of the P-40 type airplane was drawn up and forwarded to higher headquarters for transmission to Washington. It was the first, but certainly not the last of this series. A full year later, however, many of these defects still were incorporated as standard equipment in P-40 models.

Colonel George and Buzz Wagner held different opinions on important points, such as the fighting qualities of the P-40 type airplane; but they both championed fundamentals, to wit, combat tactics.

While admitting the undeniably favorable points of the P-40, Lieutenant Wagner believed that a lighter, faster, higher altitude airplane designed for swift maneuverability was needed. He argued that pilots who had proved their powers with the P-40 would find it a more effective weapon, while pilots who hitherto had not brought down a Jap plane, and indeed had remained alive as much from luck as from skill in combat would score with it against the

enemy. He never denied that the P-40 was a good airplane; he merely insisted that a better one could be designed to meet the Japanese type and style of attack. On the other hand, the Colonel believed that well trained pilots using the P-40 properly could take their weight in Japanese half a dozen times over, and live to do it again. He used Lieutenant Wagner himself as his best illustration! Nevertheless, the P-40 was not his ideal either. He envisaged a plane something like the P-39, or Airacobra. In fact this sleek fighter incorporated many of his own ideas, and he did some of the pick and shovel work on this machine, so far as the Army Air Corps was concerned, particularly with reference to the 20-millimeter cannon. But Lieutenant Wagner would not accept this one either: Still too heavy; still too weakly engined; still too earth-bound; not enough altitude.

And so it went on.

"I'd worry if they didn't grouse," grinned the Colonel one afternoon after the squatting pilots of Lunde's "seminar" had shambled out into the sunshine, leaving behind them an almost solid recording of recriminations against the P-40. "Show me a bunch of pilots without imagination enough to grouse about the airplanes they've got, and I'll show you a squadron dead on its feet."

"But—"

"Yes, I know," he interrupted. "Where there's all that smoke—"

"Exactly."

"I agree. I want to look these suggestions over carefully; then we'll prepare a covering letter and send them forward. We're going to kill enough boys in this war without doing it uselessly through our own shortcomings."

It must remain a tribute to the depth of character of this man that he welcomed and considered the opinion of any man, whatever his position or rank, the only requirement being that it be the product of a reasonable modicum of logical thinking coupled with the elements of proof.

"I still think you're wrong, sir," I said, following one of these "P-40 wrangles."

He winked. "And I still think," he said, "that you may be right—but I'm still thinking, too!"

With what we had, we continued to fight the best kind of air war we knew how. There hadn't been a day since December 16 that the decimated units of the 24th Pursuit Squadron failed to make from one to three or more reconnaissance missions covering the entire island of Luzon, from Legaspi on the east to Aparri on the north and Lingayen on the west.

The great armada still stood within the Lingayen. More than eighty ships. What a target! And how utterly helpless we were to take advantage of it. We dared not risk our few fighters for close-in fighting, or we risked blinding ourselves through loss of the only units that could provide the Commander-in-Chief with the information he must have. The bombers had made sweeps. But to send them relatively unescorted, or only lightly escorted (which at best was all we could do) out in broad daylight conditions of best bombing would have been to send them to their death. Yet in the raids they had made, calculated to bring them over at daylight, the weather had been all against us. Cold, dark mists had shut out the enemy in a target-hiding blanket.

"Don't worry," Colonel George advised us in those black hours. "The Navy'll take care of those impudent little guys. We've got submarines—"

"Yes, but why th' hell don't they do something?" we demanded in a chorus. "Just think what the German U-boat command would do to a target like that."

"And so will we. It takes time to maneuver those tin fish into proper position. And don't think, either, that the Nips are not ready for them. The first rash move, and—*fu-ut-t!* There goes your sub. They've got problems, too, you know."

"I suppose so," chimed in Bud Sprague. "I suppose they're wondering the same thing about us in the Air Corps."

"You've got something there," rejoined the Colonel. "History will have plenty to say about this show of ours. It won't be easy to defend ourselves by pointing out that being forced to remain on the defensive in the air involves the same tremendous disadvantages as being forced to the defensive in any other arm, particularly when the enemy heavily outnumbers you. He chooses the time and place of attack. He knows your few defendable positions.

He can hit when and how he wishes, and with great force. As he did with us, he'll usually hit when already inferior strength has been crippled further by exhaustion and breakdowns accumulating from constant patrolling to prevent surprise. Sounds silly, maybe, but you actually can conduct a type of offensive with a smaller number of airplanes than you can get by with in defense. A relatively small, hard-hitting, secretly based, well maintained squadron whose pilots are trained to fight as a single weapon, will be able to inflict great losses on a much larger enemy force in known location unacquainted with its plans. Unfortunately for us right now, it rather looks as though we've got reverse English on the thing," he smiled. "We've the job to defend the whole of the Philippine Islands with a baby air force against a—a—well, anyway, it's reverse English!"

And with that he broke off the discussion, saying: "Come on. We got work to do. We'll never win the war thinking how strong the other fellow is. Haven't got time!"

They come over every morning now. And maybe at noon. Or they drop in for afternoon tea. It's plain to be seen that the enemy now is operating bombers from Philippine fields. He no longer flies all the way from Formosa and then back.

Speaking of tea, I've solved that troublesome matter of feeling hungry the instant I hear an air-raid siren. I eat. Simple, but it works. Strange how all nervousness fades away, even if the beggars are directly overhead, provided I'm eating something. And the best thing is an orange. So I have a line of them in one drawer of my desk. There are three fewer oranges tonight. They were over three times today.

This time there were decoys of low-flying, slow, obsolete type 96's; perfect meat for any modern fighter. Maybe our old P-26's could have taken a couple of them—but they, or even what luckless 40's we might have sent out, would have fared badly at the hands of sleek fighters far, far up above even the bombers, just waiting for such an opportunity.

"Look at that great big bomb coming down!" suddenly ex-

claimed one of the enlisted men watching from the entry to the tunnel.

We stared along the sighting of his pointing finger.

True enough. Apparently a bomb of tremendous proportions was hurtling earthward in the vicinity of Taguig, in the valley between us and the Laguna de Bay region.

That falling body seemed to whip the very air around us into a tension that was drawn swiftly with it to the point of impact. Now . . .

But there was no explosion, no eruption of flame and smoke and spouting tree of debris.

"A dud!" exclaimed someone.

But it wasn't. An hour later a patrol brought it in—our first close-up view of a Japanese belly tank which had been cast loose by one of those high-altitude fighters. With its additional gasoline the fighter had been enabled to prolong his patrol with the bombers, even to fly from distant points with them, and return, too.

It was not badly damaged. And even a cursory inspection revealed its good construction and excellent materials.

And why not? The aluminum had come from America.

Mel and Annalee Jacoby of *Time* and *Life* are up here for a visit today. Wanted to go over the records of the chaps who have been recommended for citations. I've turned over the papers to them. They're seated at the big table out on the porch. Don't know a more confirmed pair of bomb dodgers than they. Started up in China. Mel is not popular with the Nips. He made too many uncomplimentary remarks about them over the Chungking radio. Mel will do best to refrain from constituting himself a member of a reception committee in the event that the Nips do take Manila. They're quite anxious to meet him socially. One war's not enough for Mel and Annalee. They've just been married.

They've taken the records of Lieutenant Church, Lieutenant Marrett, Lieutenant Putnam, Lieutenant Wagner, Lieutenant Keator and others of that group whose names I had included at General Brereton's order before I went to USAFFE. I hope these

lads got proper mention in the States. Some of them never will hear of it, or see it.

Like a dash of fresh, cold water on a hot day is this visit of my old friends Lieutenants Edwards and Arter. But I can take only one of them for my staff, the Colonel advises me. The choice is not easy. I almost make a mental coin toss. Edwards wins.

Arter, like the champ he is, smiles, grips my hand, and takes off for Clark Field, his old station—or what is left of it. Shall we see him again?

Lieutenant Edwards has been sick. And looks it. But he guns up and sails into a task of arranging and classifying maps that will go with us should it become necessary to establish a headquarters underground—or somewhere else.

Just in case . . . Yes. That gives me another thought. One that I don't like. But there are many thoughts one does not like these days. I clear up for the moment and go to our quarters. There I gather from my trunks the imposing stack of letters from home. They must be burned.

Beside the service road back of the house I kindle a little fire with some of them. But I find myself reading others. My "small" son's feet are as big as mine. Bigger! And my young daughter has drawn me a picture of someone: I don't think she likes her very well! And here . . .

But that won't do. Burn 'em!

The little flame wriggles higher and bites into the corners of a whole pack of them. As they curl in the heat, the Fort McKinley air-raid siren mounts into echoing alarm.

Yes, there they come. Nine, in perfect formation. Close in. The ack-ack guns are pumping shells at them.

Carefully I measure and estimate. Had I better illustrate the truism that retreat may be the better part of valor? I can reach the tunnel entry in about ten good seconds.

The bombs are dropping . . . Falling bodies accelerate at the rate of thirty-two feet per second per second until . . .

No, I'll stay here. Those bombs will fall far north. And they do, with a jarring roll.

Now the formation wings over gently and takes a new course. Closer.

The next stick of bombs?

*Ba-an-ng!*

And I have taken off without benefit of run, right over the top of a hedge, and am moving with amazing rapidity toward the tunnel entry. There I stop. In my righteous anger I have completely forgotten the hostile flight high overhead.

Unbeknown to me, a Filipino sentry had come up close behind me as I stood engrossed in the little fire that was consuming my only ties with home. Then the bombers had engaged my concentration. His, too. But unable to restrain some indication of his desire to inflict punishment upon the cheeky invaders, he had raised his old Springfield to within a few inches of my right ear, and let fly. The fact that the bombers were serene in their twenty-thousand-foot elevation, while his old bolt-action .30 would do well to reach half that, did not trouble him in the least. He felt better, anyway.

I have been sent to USAFFE to determine what may be the ground situation. And the answer plainly is—not so good.

From Colonel Willoughby's "crib" in the G-2 Section, I go to G-3; and the duty officer points to the situation map. With us are two officers from the Marine Corps. The enemy landings at San Fernando, La Union, and at Damortis on the Lingayen coast have been serious. Our beach defenses at Damortis and farther south at the village of Lingayen have crumbled. The enemy is coming inland from Bauang, below San Fernando, on the highway. Apparently he is driving hard for Baguio.

Already at least one unit of our tanks has been cut off in the Baguio region. They'll have to fight their way out—if they can—and join our withdrawing units in the road nets south of Rosario.

"And that leaves Baguio?" I ask, incredulous. The major nods. Somehow I can't assimilate that. Aparri, yes. And some others of those remote places. But Baguio! Why, that's . . . Yes, quite. That's different! And for the first time, but, alas, not for the last, I

experience a queer, uncomfortable sensation of imprisonment. It is just a transient feeling. But real.

"The cavalry has been pretty badly shot up," the major continues. "It did a fine piece of work. But the casualties seem to have been very heavy."

There was a story about the cavalry standing by to allow our tanks to pass ahead. There was a break in the line of rumbling monsters. The cavalry commander peered to the rear. Other tanks were coming. He waved his impatient horsemen to continue their stand-by until all tanks should have passed.

Suddenly there was a ripping hail of fire and lead from the turrets and gun slots of the approaching tanks. Instantly the place, enclosed as it was by rugged country and trees, became a death-trap. Amid the screams of wounded horses and the cries of hurt, disorganized men, the death-spitting tanks came on.

Instead of being the rear guard of the American tanks, they were the advance units of the enemy.

I am counting the symbols on the map. The organizations marked in blue are pathetically few; those in red, many and threatening.

The ground situation, I must report, is decidedly alarming.

The next day the enemy has doubled our peril. Striking in suddenly from the Pacific, he has made heavy landings in San Miguel Bay south of us.

"All available fighter aircraft to attack landing parties," was the order that went out.

Now, with the war just over two weeks old, the sum total of pursuit airplanes we can put into the air to face this new threat from the south is eighteen! Six of them are P-40's, all in need of urgent maintenance. Six are P-35's.

But those eighteen slice into the Japanese with the fury of demons. Showers of fragmentation bombs geyser mud, sand, and water high into the air, and in it all are the tossing bodies of many men and much equipment. Now, their bombs gone, they wheel over like blood-crazed vampires and whip back with machine guns stitching long seams of death up and down the tumbled beaches.

But instead of eighteen, we should have eighty, and then eighty

more—and after that another eighty! It would have been that way had Colonel George been able to realize on his visionary plan for the air defense of these islands. And then the story of the Japanese invasions would not be one of relatively cheap achievement for him. We can sting. But that's all. We cannot paralyze.

Two of the P-35's are so shot up by antiaircraft fire that they are forced to come in on their riddled bellies.

Now we've got sixteen pursuit planes in flyable condition.

But the ground crews, staggering with the fatigue of days and nights, and rocky with repeated bombings that have destroyed their facilities, killed their personnel, and driven them into the bundoc, are working unceasingly, and tomorrow we shall make up the loss of those precious two.

And maybe we'll be hearing about some reinforcements from Australia.

Maybe . . .

*Fort McKinley—December 24th*

The banshee wailed; the sirens came early today.

Leisurely the personnel at No. 28 consummated the routine outlined for office personnel during air raids and filed out toward the entrance of the tunnel. I slipped on my gun belt, gas mask, and helmet, and together with Captain Sprague went to the street. General Brereton's new Packard, containing two of his staff and some of the civilian secretaries, dashed by, aimed toward the tunnel entrance in the center of the little circle where were located the General's quarters and our old No. 41. Several other cars and trucks took shelter beneath the trees at some distance from the Headquarters at the Officers' Club. The morning suddenly grew heavy with the tense weighted silence so characteristic of that interval after sirens and before actual bombing. Then we heard them, far to the west. Slowly they came on. But even before they were visible to us at that point the atmosphere shook itself sluggishly, then again and again in a dull heavy roll.

"The harbor," guessed Bud Sprague, listening intently.

"They have been after those few ships for days now," I agreed. "Every once in a while they get one, but the effort seems to be out of all proportion to the gain."

But Bud was listening again, and his face indicated puzzlement. "Doesn't sound quite right," he said slowly. "Those bombs are not falling in water."

The unrhythymical drone of the enemy bombers dimmed into nothingness and slowly reissued from another quarter. Came anew that sodden thundering of the hot morning air and the long roll of enemy bombs.

"Whatever it is, they are giving it a real lacing," said Bud, the bitterness in his voice betraying that helplessness we all knew so well. The antiaircraft batteries were vainly trying to reach the invaders where they floated majestically just out of range. The Japanese knew to a foot the extreme elevation of our antiaircraft shells. There was no point in unduly risking their machines. In area bombing, the target was of sufficiently generous proportions for damaging blows from a practically safe altitude. Nor would they give more than passing attention to the possibility of interception. It was their general practice to accomplish high-level bombing from slightly above 21,000 feet while 8,000 to 10,000 feet higher Zero fighters hovered to dart upon any hapless P-40 that might dare an attack upon the bombers.

But now there were no P-40's. Under Headquarters' order our few remaining fighters were to be jealously husbanded for reconnaissance purposes. They were our eyes.

Slowly over the green bunched foliage of the Fort McKinley trees to the west sinister shapes arose. Black smoke slowly ballooning—here, there and there. . . .

Now the sky and atmosphere were quiet again. In another few minutes the prolonged cry of the siren announced, "All clear."

It was all clear at McKinley.

But it was chaos, fire, and sudden death in the port area of Manila: the most devastating raid so far. It ripped huge craters in the pavements, flung streetcar rails into grotesque rigid shapes, blasted windows and left gaping ragged frames where they had been. The powder of smashed masonry choked the air, rendering

more persistent the acrid fumes that whipped out with the thick smoke, shouldered by impatient flames. Many buildings were hit, particularly those in the Engineer Island area. And later that morning we were to know that the rolling beat of the bombs had drummed out the life of Commander Cowie, Director of the Bureau of Coast and Geodetic Survey, whose kindly patience and quick response had rendered us such invaluable assistance in the compiling, producing, and distributing of sorely needed maps.

Even as the word came through of this great loss, another telephone on the Headquarters line was dinging its request that I assist in the preparation of further flight maps to the south. Mindanao, Tarakan, Balik Papan, Kendari, Soerabaja, Bandoeng, Batavia. It was Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell's voice. And as he spoke there was a sudden conviction within me.

The "Tops" were going south!

I sought Colonel George, but he and Captain Eads had not yet returned from their own night reconnaissance to locate more airfield sites at the head of Bataan Peninsula. I was nervous and uneasy, and glanced along the Post circle road toward the Carabao Gate; but they were not in sight. I wanted to tell him of my suspicions—yes, more than suspicions. Convictions . . .

These convictions were verified in delivering two of the completed maps to the headquarters, when I came upon General Brereton, Colonel Brady, Colonel Eubank—his face still badly bruised and his arm suspended in a sling—and Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell poring over our most recently compiled statistical data concerning airfields in Netherlands East Indies. As I handed them to Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell, I yielded to an impulse:

"Since you will be using these yourself, I have included a few particular navigation helps that I learned while in the Indies," I said nonchalantly.

He fixed me for a moment with his sharp eyes. Then, "Thanks, very much, but how . . ."

"I just was not sure whether to make it Kendari to Koepang to Darwin, or Kendari to Soerabaja," I said, smiling. "So I have given you both."

Again he stared at me, and then smiled. "We are not sure ourselves," he said lamely. "That's what the huddle's about."

Later in the afternoon, I saw General Brereton alone in his office and went to say goodbye. My feelings were varied. From the first day I had responded to something in his make-up, something impulsive and warm-hearted that was seldom allowed to reveal itself. I felt that, as early as October, he had possessed a clear vision of the horribly grim experience which faced us, and that he would allow nothing to interfere with his measures of preparation. I felt too that he was appalled by the tragic unevenness of the impending contest; a few hundred aircraft of all types on the defensive against thousands, with the enemy choosing his own time and place of attack; skilled staffs filled out, rendered the more efficient by four years of intensive warfare, against our handful of resolute leaders assisted by a few dozen individuals whose unfailing loyalty, quiet determination, and inexhaustible labors still were no substitute for long years of training and practical experience; single telephone lines and a few isolated radio sets against tried and proved military communication systems in the hands of expert operators; obsolete equipment or no equipment at all, against the latest and finest the world of war had produced . . . There was no end to these comparisons. He knew that. He had instilled tireless energy into the sluggish forward motion of preparation. Cautiously at first, and then with undisguised word and action he supported Colonel George's recommendations. And now he believed that the air fight, as far as the Philippines was concerned, was over. Less than two dozen fighter planes remained to us. If even a successful delaying action was to be fought in the air, support must be obtained. But where? From Australia? the Netherlands East Indies?

General Brereton gripped my hand tightly and, in short chopped sentences, expressed his appreciation of my attention to duty. He said nothing of his impending departure or of those who were to remain. I turned quickly and left the room.

There was no raid that afternoon, but our frayed nerves suffered the impact of a new shock. It came in the form of messages from the south. The landings at Lamon Bay were unquestionably serious.

The pincers were established and slowly drawing together—Lingayen on the north and Tayabas on the south.

Late in the afternoon, the "Two Hals" returned, tired, dust-beaten, and hungry. There was an immediate call from Headquarters for Colonel George. He did not pause, even long enough to wash the road dust from his begrimed hands and face. In half an hour he was back. There were only the four of us—the "Four Untwitchables." Colonel George's face was grim. He seemed suddenly to alter. He stared at the floor as he spoke in short clipped words. "Captain Sprague, will you issue an order at once to the effect that the Fifth Interceptor Command will evacuate immediately to Bataan Peninsula."

For a moment my head seemed to spin slowly on my shoulders. So this was it. . . . Dimly the Colonel's words came to me.

"All needed maps and essential records will be packed immediately and transported by our own truck in charge of our own personnel. All other maps and records that might be of use to the enemy will be burned beyond recognition. Personnel will be allowed a very few minutes to gather essentials for a prolonged stand under jungle conditions. All other effects must be abandoned."

There was a heavy intense choking silence. It was Bud Sprague's "Yes, sir," that brought us out of it as he pivoted on his heel to dictate the order. Neither Hal Eads nor myself spoke. The Colonel's eyes were blinking rapidly, his jaw was set. Then he turned to Captain Eads.

"Hal," he said, "will you take the car and go back over the ground we have just covered? Return all the way to the Engineering Camp and try to pick out a temporary site for the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the 5th Air Force and of the 5th Interceptor Command. I will be over in the morning."

Captain Eads, who had slept but little during the week and had just completed this grueling reconnaissance with Colonel George, did not hesitate an instant. "Yes, Colonel," he said. Tightening his gun belt, he seized his rifle and helmet and clumped down the outside steps to the waiting car.

It was in the dusk of this momentous day that Colonel George returned from another long conference at Headquarters. We met

at our own Headquarters in the gloom of the blackout lamps. Now he moved slowly. He seemed worn and weary.

"Well," he said, his voice low, "I have got it . . . I have got the Command . . ." His voice trailed off.

"You mean that they are going south and you have been named to command the Air Force here?" I cut in, my voice indicating the pride that I felt.

He nodded. "Yes, that's it. I have got the command—but what a command!" he added dejectedly.

It was ironical in the extreme.

He had often told me how it was the pinnacle of any military man's service to achieve command of a major unit. He had poured unstintingly all his mental and physical energy into the organization and development of this air force—for another to command. Now, shattered and cast to the four winds, disorganized and bereft of men and flying equipment—it was his.

For a long moment he stared at the blackened floor, then suddenly arose, as the unquenchable spirit within him beat down despair and forced it to retire before his determination.

"There are more than five thousand kids in this Air Corps that do not know how to fight, that do not know how to live, that do not know how to take care of themselves—that don't know anything about anything, so far as what's ahead of them is concerned. I have twenty airplanes. I have got a lot of trucks, and I have got five thousand kids without a leader." He turned and fixed me with the fierce intensity of his black eyes. "Yes," he said, his voice trembling, "it *is* a command. . . . It's a hellish responsibility. It's exactly what I told them there tonight; I said: 'I don't like it, General, but I'll take it.'"

He stared at the floor again a few seconds, then turned abruptly on his heel. "Come on. We have got work to do."

And from that moment until he fought his last fierce battle in the heat-stopped silence of a North Australian night, I never knew him completely to cease doing that work.

## *Christmas Eve*

Nineteen hundred and forty-one years ago the shadowy forms of three wise men bulked against the star-bright sky and, moving forward, sought the manger where lay the Prince of Peace.

Christmas Eve.

The sky is alight again.

But there are no stars. Blotted black by the great shroud of smoke that spreads its sable wings the horizons around, quivering flames dance their wicked pirouettes beneath the pall, and intervening structures loom darkly against them.

"Peace on earth, good will toward men . . ."

A diamond-studded jewel springs into being beyond the rolling McKinley hills and builds swiftly into a glittering tiara that blinds the choked sky with light, then crumbles redly into death. The very atmosphere pauses to witness—and shudders with violent convulsion that rattles the house.

"Hark! the herald angels sing . . ."

And another savage rattle as though a great giant were displeased and would shake sense into this insane picture. The lurid hobgoblins race with hot breath over the smoldering remains of the tiara. And the world trembles.

"Silent night, holy night . . ."

Far into the depths of the smoke mountains above Manila Bay, a vast globe of fire glows redly, rolls slowly, ascends the valley between endless peaks and tips over them into another world far beyond.

No. . . . Not smoke mountains . . .

This is a Christmas tree!

A sinister Christmas tree, so vast that all heaven is filled with the light of it. A consuming, Gargantuan Christmas tree—to celebrate the birth nineteen hundred and forty-one years ago of the Prince of Peace.

It is Christmas Eve.

They are blowing up Nichols Field.

*Bataan Christmas present*

For me, inevitably since childhood, Fate, seemingly influenced by the benignities of the festive holiday season into moods of mellow amiability, had ordained Christmas morning as a happy and memorable occasion. Sleep during the preceding dark hours not infrequently had been sketchy: in youthful years, because of my determination to detect Father Christmas in the act of distributing gifts; and later, because of the necessity of avoiding detection by a newer generation—fortunately, just as sleepy as I had once proved.

A kymograph record of sleep for last night would have revealed the same peaks and valleys—but, alas! for reasons completely unassociated with gifts of Yule cheer. It is doubtful if our muscles ever relaxed into healthy regeneration.

Through the darkness, fitfully broken by baleful glares from the devastated Nichols Field, came the sounds of troops on the move—troops in retreat. The cocked ear repeatedly alarmed the weary brain—mistaking for the engines of high-flying airplanes the muffled drone of truck motors as the burdened convoys hammered their way around the circle road and out the Fort McKinley gates for the last time. The calls of drivers for directions. The nervous challenge of unseen sentries. Now and again the single angry smack of a rifle or a short burst of machine-gun fire.

Then suddenly for me a precipitous change from sleep to full wakefulness and the automatic snatching of clothing and equipment. The house quivered and jumped to three terrific bursts.

From Lefty's room a startled voice cried out: "This is too hot for me. I am getting out of here!"

It was the civilian, Brodine. I had forgotten that he had dropped into Lefty's empty bed the night before. Already he was in his clothes and belting on his equipment.

"Take it easy, boy," called Colonel George. "It's only some more demolitions, either in the port area or on the northern front."

But Brodine was gone, plumping rapidly off the front porch

and away. The tall hedge around the house filtered the bursting lights from the southwest.

Just before dawn the warm winds brought the dull thump of repeated explosions far to the north. Had the convoy been hit? Or had enemy agents blown out our main bridges at Meycauayan and above Calumpit? Possibly it was our own demolition parties blasting all possible alternate road bridges preparatory to the final closing of the Manila-Baguio and Manila-Cabanatuan highways. Whatever they were, the sinister detonations urged Colonel George and myself from our beds for the last time.

"Roll 'em right: you don't know where you will be sleeping tonight," he advised, strapping a bunk mattress, pillow, and sheets into a compact roll.

We had no standard-bedroll equipment. We had never seen any indication that it existed; yet it had been obvious for a long time that we might have to take to the field and jungle.

"I'll take one foot locker," Colonel George added; "and I'll empty the larder of all canned goods and everything else the car will load."

"I'll take two cross-country bags and a suitcase," I listed, eyeing two foot lockers that had come over from the States with me. Full to the lid, they were: wool uniforms, shoes, Russian boots, tropical uniforms, dress jackets, civilian clothes, books, even my Christmas package from home, unopened . . . I turned away with set jaw. Hundreds of dollars' worth! But what was that when we were losing Fort McKinley and Manila—and what after that? At least we had our lives.

Our faithful cookie and houseboy set our breakfast out before us, and we put it away in silence. There were too many thoughts for any of them to be spoken. Then we paid off these servants who had stood by us faithfully through all alarms, bombings, and growing uncertainty, told them to help themselves to anything left, and, with quick handshakes got into our heavily laden car and gave the word to Sergeant Dey. It was not the usual car, but a fine new Packard Clipper—General Brereton's.

"I inherited it along with the Far East Air Force," grinned Colo-

nel George as we hummed easily along the now deserted circle road and shot out through the Carabao Gate.

Neither of us turned for a final look. We knew all too well the dismal picture of that United States military post deserted and silent awaiting the coming of the Japanese. A brown-churned area farther on marked the location of the antiaircraft battery that had so courageously but ineffectively hurled its shells at the insolent enemy always out of reach far above. But just then the thin wail of sirens arose across the rolling hills from Manila. Significantly the Fort McKinley siren was silent.

"Make a run for those trees," directed Colonel George.

Sergeant Dey accelerated the heavy car to the point of shelter. Then we scattered away from the road. We had learned how enemy raiders made a practice of machine-gunning ditches beneath the trees along the road. Natural hide-outs; therefore, strafe them. . . .

We waited, with increasing impatience; for we did not know just when the demolition parties would blast our only escape route north from Manila into impassability. We searched the hot blue sky in every direction.

Then Colonel George spoke shortly. "It's one chance or another. Shall we go?"

We rejoined the car and raced past Nielson Field with its deserted Headquarters building and sandbag walls still in place. Beyond, the fire-blackened hangar showed grimly where the P-40 had bulletted through the night before, when our Clark Field pursuit, unable to find their new hide-out field at the head of Bataan Peninsula, had roared over Manila at dusk. Finally some had landed at Nielson to get directions—one ground-looping full tilt into the side of the big hangar—and through the wall into it. He escaped ahead of the ensuing flames.

We gained South Manila just as the all-clear sounded.

We pulled up sharply at one place where some of our civilian office personnel lived. They had had sufficient notice of the impending evacuation—all night the convoys had thundered past them; but somehow the full grimness of the situation did not dawn upon them until arrival of the inescapable hour for goodbye,

when it came with a rush, accompanied by terror for the future.

But we could not tarry. Perhaps it was as well. The pain of abandoning these fine people to the mercies of an invading army would not bear dwelling upon. As we rushed to reenter our car, one of them came running from the house with two packages in bright wrappings.

"Your Christmas presents," she called, "from the folks in the office."

We took them and called our thanks out of the window as the car leapt forward. Had the chauffeur not engaged the clutch and rushed us away at that moment, there might have been a regrettable breakdown of our determination not to increase their agony by a display of emotional weakness. Neither of us spoke. Neither of us dared to examine the little beribboned packages. Nor did we look back.

Rapidly we drove down familiar Taft Avenue, now almost deserted. Only an occasional carromata, its ponies' hoofs striking sharply on the morning air, was making use of this broad highway, usually the busiest thoroughfare in Manila. Another brief stop at Marquette University, which had been the temporary home of some of our grounded squadrons from Nichols Field. But they had evacuated, and the Catholic fathers bade us Godspeed as they turned resolutely to face what was threatening from the south. Then on down past the University of the Philippines, where stood silent clusters of bewildered Filipinos. Past Jai-Alai Club where American and Filipino alike had spent thrilling nights at the most exciting of ball games.

Sternberg Hospital! The Colonel frowned as he peered at the evidence of existing military occupation here.

"They will be too late," he muttered, the first words he had said since our departure. A look of anxiety crossed his face as he peered through the rear window. "I wonder . . ."

His voice trailed off, but I knew what he meant. The same thought had occurred to me: Had they been able to move all their wounded? We understood that there were both American and Japanese cases crowding that old hospital. Would the nurses leave? Would the staff abandon the helpless cases that had yellow

skins? We were to know later how the head nurse had steadfastly refused to leave her post and how many of the nursing staff had remained with her.

We turned left in front of the massive Bureau of Posts building with its impressive columned front, and shot along Gral Luna past the familiar entrance to old Fort Santiago and on beyond to the port area. Colonel George wished to ascertain for himself that there were no stragglers left from the evacuation of Air Force personnel by sea the night before. We felt our way around giant craters, blasted out of the asphalted streets, and drove cautiously over the brittle carpet of glass, spread everywhere. On several occasions great patches of red were mute evidence of death and injury inflicted upon men, women, and children in the destructive bombing of the day before. Smoke still spiraled from charred heaps of rubble, and the skeletons of cars showed brown and rigid.

The drumming of engines drew our attention to the right. Here a huge warehouse of Quartermaster's stores had disgorged its contents into a vacant enclosure at the rear. Trucks bearing the Air Corps symbol were among the agglomeration of vehicles which formed a throbbing line. Those which went away were springing down with foodstuffs and supplies of every description.

We did not know it then, but those Air Corps trucks whose weary crews had voluntarily offered themselves and their vehicles for the salvaging and transporting of all the foodstuffs they could carry were destined to have a considerable effect upon the military history of the Philippines campaign. How were we to know, for instance, that until the crisis only rudimentary measures had been taken for feeding a large army on Bataan Peninsula? How were we to know that of the essential Army foodstuffs in the Philippines, nearly half the reserve had been stored in Manila, while a large part of the other half was on Corregidor? The Bataan hills were loaded with munitions by the farsighted Ordnance Department. But this admirable vision had not been shown by certain other divisions of the Army, and had it not been for these same Air Corps trucks and their fatigue-beaten crews, a great number of the shells so carefully stored on Bataan never would have been fired at our implacable enemies because the soldiers whose duty

it was to transport and fire them would have collapsed from illness and starvation long before they did. For two weeks, everything that would turn a wheel in Manila or float across the Bay had been confiscated for this service. We were to learn later on Bataan how Quartermaster junior officers and noncommissioned officers begged these last Air Corps units to load to the limit and carry away as much as they could before demolition squads set fire to or blasted the remainder beyond usefulness to the incoming Japanese. We were to learn how some of these truck crews made repeated trips from Bataan to Manila and back for the express purpose of moving a maximum of this quintessential supply to the soon-to-be beleaguered Peninsula. We saw small mountains of flour. We saw solid ranks of one-, two-, and five-pound candy boxes in bright-colored packages sealed in glistening cellophane. These things we saw, and much more, before the car's motion cut off our view. Truly it was the spilling of the golden horn of plenty.

We were to know the famine.

Pier 7 again. Into my mind flashed visions of that first day. Then, long lines of gayly dressed people had adorned the wharf level and upper story of this largest covered pier in the world. The Fort McKinley band played welcoming music, in the hot May-time air. Truly a festive occasion. Now, where these shouting laughing people had welcomed us there was glass inches deep, ragged chunks of mortar chipped by flying fragments of bombs. In front of the building two Filipinos were endeavoring to coax a wrecked military motor cycle into life. The entrances were still guarded by youthful Filipino sentries who watched us with lack-luster eyes.

Rapidly the Colonel walked the length of the great pier. It had suffered little structural damage, and I wondered whether the Japanese had deliberately avoided shelling it in the certainty that they would make use of it themselves one day. Everywhere were evidences of hasty evacuation the night before. Cases of machine-gun bullets, both .30 and .50 caliber, several broached cases of rifles, still damp with inefficiently removed cosmoline. Cases of aviation instruments. Small bales of gas masks, abandoned clothing, ship's gear, and a scattered miscellany of small military equipment.

"We certainly could use that .50-caliber stuff," observed the Colonel, glancing sharply seaward. But there were no vessels in sight except possibly two far out towards Corregidor. "They may be coming back for it. We hope so. . . . Or no, we don't!"

For at that moment came the rising agonized wail of the air-raid sirens for the second time. No one who has lived in company with death riding the air waves can hear this sinister sound without a quickening of the pulse, a dryness in the throat, or a quick tingling of the hair roots.

"All right, let's get out of here. This may be the target again."

Colonel George turned and strode rapidly toward the street. But I stopped.

"I want a rifle; I feel unarmed with just a pistol," I said. Running over to one of the broached rifle cases, I picked out one closest to the top. From another case near the main entrance of Pier 7 I seized several packages of .45 caliber and rifle ammunition. A quick examination revealed that this rifle had been fairly well cleared of cosmoline. I jammed the clip into the magazine and stacked the gun alongside the Colonel's Garand within the robe rail of the car. We jerked into motion with a heavy settling of the springs and took off rapidly in the direction of the San Fernando road.

Constantly we craned our necks in order to scan the skies while the driver held the car steadily to as much speed as was consistent with war-hammered streets and the slight amount of traffic. We were well past Caloocan, the railroad shops and yards of the Manila Railroad Company, when we saw the first of the raiders. Quickly we stopped and prepared to dash for shelter. But it was obvious that the nine bombers, whose presence had occasioned the alarm, were not interested in Manila proper. Rather they seemed to be intent on the Cavite area, or possibly Corregidor.

We resumed the journey, and in a short time had passed through Marilao, the popular rendezvous of night joy riders from Manila. Along the narrow street the cheerful Filipino attendants of the refreshment stands waved the cordial greeting they had always given to travelers en route to Clark Field or Baguio. Two heavily laden Air Corps trucks had been parked while drivers soaked up

momentary stimulation. I wondered how long they had been without decent food and drink.

Then Malolos. Everywhere tight little clusters of wondering Filipinos watched us with questioning eyes as we swept along; all cheerfully waving in response to our own greetings.

They held up their fingers in the victory "V" sign.

It was with relief that we noticed traffic apparently still moving northward. Still we were apprehensive that with each turn in the highway we would come upon the long-stalled line which would mean that the bridges already had been destroyed. Our anxiety grew as we approached Calumpit, for beyond that town lay the Pampanga River, one of the critical key points.

Suddenly the driver veered sharply to the left and pulled up.

"Bombers!" was his only explanation. It was enough. In a trice we were out and taking refuge under spreading trees. Above we could hear the uneven droning of their engines flying high. But again they went on.

"Corregidor must be catching it plenty today," said Colonel George grimly as we reentered and got into quick motion. The distance was too great for us to hear the exploding bombs. Maybe it wasn't Corregidor, anyway.

Calumpit was crowded; still, not unduly so. We had overtaken one section of a convoy, but it was moving. From the truck ahead, the red-nosed snout of a dismounted Naval gun from devastated Cavite Navy Yard pointed over our heads. The truck sagged with its great burden. It was truly a punishing overload. But how grateful we were to be that those drivers were persevering and eventually delivered their grim and weighty packages to Bataan Peninsula!

It was with profound relief that we passed through Calumpit and onto the spans of the Pampanga River bridge. To the east, Manila Railroad bridge still was intact.

Beyond the Pampanga we emerged into a flat, naked country that left us flying along far from the shelter of any friendly trees. We all were aware of that.

But the shock of something else left us momentarily cold to the fact of our vulnerability.

Our eyes were riveted in mingled horror and sorrow upon the great pillar of smoke that rose stiffly far into the blue sky ahead and then spiraled heavily off to the left. We knew well enough what that was. The heartbreaking scenes of destruction that had been enacted to the accompaniment of the vast percussions and raging fire at Nichols Field last night were being reenacted in all their hideousness at Clark Field. Fort Stotsenburg, too, judging from the expanse and volume of the mushrooming column of smoke —a lopsided mushroom that leaned crazily to the west and flattened out abruptly in a long trail over the mountains towards Zambales Province.

The evil cloud weighed suffocatingly on our spirits for a long period. We did not speak, and covered our wretchedness by popping our heads out of the windows like Punch and Judy for repeated observation of the sky for hostile bombers. But ever again our eyes were drawn, fascinated by the funeral bier of our military installation upon which so many of our hopes and plans and labors had centered. How long and painful had been the building! How speedy the demise!

Constantly now we were swinging out as we overtook heavy convoy units. Repeatedly we passed trucks groaning beneath dismounted Naval guns similar to that first red-snouted one. Traffic was nearly all northward toward San Fernando. At one point we passed heavy road equipment towed by clattering trucks of the caterpillar type.

"Good to see that," commented the Colonel. "It's going to Bataan to help us build airfields."

"You mean we have no airfields there yet?"

My question betrayed the alarm I felt. We had been building emergency airfields at a rate that completely put to shame the ponderous deliberations of the Philippine Department Engineering Office of other days (not so long ago either!), and somehow I had assumed that there were prepared fields on Bataan where we were to make our stand. The Colonel nodded shortly.

"Oh, we'll not be entirely at a loss on that account," he assured me. "However, they are fairly high up on the Peninsula, and we must complete some further toward our rear. We will inspect some

of these emergency fields on the other side of San Fernando."

The streets of this important junction town were heavy with dismounted troops, mostly Filipinos. Everywhere there were convoy units. It was noontime, and obviously the crews were foraging or waiting their turn at the limited number of refreshment establishments wherein the demand far exceeded the supply. But now the traffic was bilateral, and for a long period it came to a complete halt while a tributary of our main stream flooded it almost to overflowing.

The sinister meaning of this was only too apparent. We now had reached the junction with the road from the north. One line of retreat had met the other line of retreat. The withdrawing troops pressed by the overwhelming enemy force from Lingayen and those coming down central Luzon before the Aparri thrust now met our units evacuating before the southern jaw of the pincer movement below Manila. The air was filled with the continuous throb of automotive engines. Over the curbs, between the latticed Filipino houses, back of the shops, and in open fields were vehicles of every description. Ambulances with their red crosses, pieces of artillery on pneumatic tires, portable machine shops mounted on chassis, huge Air Corps fuel tanks, and scores and scores of just the ordinary mule variety of laboring supply trucks. The traffic in the opposite direction puzzled us for a while.

"They must know that the bridges will not be destroyed for a while," guessed Colonel George. "They are going to make another run into Manila for supplies. God bless 'em. We will need every pound of that before we are through."

His guess was right. Many of these trucks were Air Corps, and they were risking everything in a further attempt to build up our all too meager reserve of food on the Peninsula. But mixed with them were trucks of every description, civilian and military, and many indeed were Quartermaster Corps vehicles. I looked at my watch and hazarded the statement that we might do well to have food.

"I have a better plan," announced the Colonel. "One of our air-fields is not so far from here. While I make an inspection, you tuck away some fodder."

"But what about you?"

"Don't worry about me. I don't believe in fighting a war on an empty stomach, as I told you before," grinned the Colonel.

By this time we had cleared the worst congestion in San Fernando and were making speed in the freer country to the southwest—for now the direction of travel had taken a turn to the left. We actually had completed the apex of the arch traversing the eastern and northern aspects of the Manila Bay shore and now were bending downward again, toward the Bataan Peninsula.

Our progress was spasmodic. Repeatedly we slowed to a crawl, under one-way restrictions imposed in order to route traffic around breakdowns and wrecks. Hardly a mile was traversed without grim testimony to the dangers of blackout driving, ranging from khaki-colored passenger cars to huge "6x6" trucks. The casualties displayed were of all degrees, usually capsized in the deep drainage ditches that flanked the highways.

Another long delay in Bacolor. Here units from the reserve areas of the Lingayen field were going into bivouac. Units from Clark Field and Stotsenburg were endeavoring to push through. Military police, sometimes by main strength and practically always by aid of heat-treated invectives, kept the general jam moving toward Bataan.

On the outskirts of the town there suddenly was a general scattering of vehicles and mass desertions by their occupants. We needed no second warning. At that moment, Sergeant Dey noted traces of a field trail to the left, half buried beneath the rank grass and weeds. Without hesitation he pulled into it, and in another moment we were swiftly piling brush of all kinds against the gleaming panels of our car. It still wore its civilian colors: a perfect target from the sky. Then we leaped into the shelter of overhanging trees.

Not a moment too soon. . . . Twenty-seven heavy bombers in V's of nine roared overhead.

"I hope the antiaircraft guns don't open on them," said the Colonel tensely. "I think they are headed for Corregidor, but if the guns here draw attention or antagonize them, they will probably let go on this road."

He left the rest to our imagination, which was plenty: miles of helpless vehicles in open country, crammed with men and matériel, unprotected by our own fighter aircraft and with only occasional batteries of antiaircraft to attempt discouragement. The sweat stood out on my forehead. It was one of these terrific moments when our whole future could have been seriously altered, or even terminated in one small uncertain turn of Fate's wheel. . . . Then came the almost equally trying letdown as the big silver machines glided on. Didn't that bomber flight commander realize what an opportunity he was allowing to slip through his fingers? Could it be that he was not aware of the irreparable damage, the paralyzing blow he could have inflicted upon the entire American defense of Bataan Peninsula and therefore Corregidor—and therefore the entire Philippine Islands?

But he let us live—whether by order or ignorance, we never were to know. Possibly it was no more than a rigid adherence to an order. His bombing objective had been established elsewhere. I for one felt weak in the legs as I helped clear the brush from our car. The previously perfect new finish of the machine now was marked by a ruinous scratched pattern from hard thorny brambles.

"It'll soon look much worse than that," said Colonel George. "We must have it painted olive at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime let's slap mud on these bright bumpers and take the shining out of them."

It was done at a near-by drainage ditch. It seemed positively sacrilegious.

By the time we regained the main highway, traffic had become more orderly, and our progress was good. Soon we found ourselves in a different type of surrounding. The flat country, with long ranges of visibility and the highway raised between two deep drainage ditches, now resolved itself into a land where vistas were rendered short indeed by the height of sugar cane growing on every hand. We were not far from the famous Del Carmen Sugar Centrale.

"This is it. Turn left," announced the Colonel pointing to a break in the cane.

I could not see what "it" referred to.

"You think it's hard to see from here," he smiled. "But you should try spotting it from the air."

"What?"

"Labao Field, where we've hidden the 21st Pursuit Group. The field is cut right into the cane country and has every appearance of merely being a cane field. It's no wonder those poor fellows couldn't spot it in the half-light last night and had to come all the way down to Nielson for directions."

Twice more during the afternoon we visited concealed locations where swarms of Filipino laborers directed by some of Captain Eads' dirty, perspiring, but honestly working disciples were whipping emergency airfields out of the rough, almost overnight, and in all too many instances with nothing but the crudest kind of mechanized equipment, or none at all. The Colonel inspected them, every foot of them, making suggestions, lending a hand, swapping a quick joke and passing on. At Hermosa we passed a stand where the Coca-Cola sign still was in evidence. My throat was thick with dust, and I knew he was just as uncomfortable; so I suggested a halt to "settle the dust." But he shook his head.

"We have not got time."

"Oh, this war will last that long, won't it?" I asked jokingly.

I was almost startled by the seriousness of his eyes as he turned to look at me.

"I am not sure," he said quietly, and we drove on.

Now we were truly dropping down into the head of the Peninsula which was to be our prison camp for the memorable months to come. We had no hint then that there would be months of it, and the deep concern that showed in his eyes when I spoke to him then made me realize grimly that there might be only a few days before the jaws of the pincers closed or squadrons of unhindered bombers blasted us into oblivion with our defense objective unachieved. At Orani and Pilar he made inspections preparing for the remnants of the 3rd Pursuit Squadron and of the 17th Pursuit Squadron respectively. The 34th Pursuit Squadron also was destined for Orani. The 21st Pursuit Squadron at Labao was going to operate as a fighter unit while those at Orani and Pilar were planned primarily for reconnaissance.

The day was growing fearfully hot, and for minutes at a time it was impossible to see the road surface at all, so much of it was being churned into the air by the endless parade of laboring truck and automobile wheels. Ammunitions, guns, bombs, quartermaster supplies, camp equipment, fuel trucks, in a dirt-choked caravan that snaked and twisted and hammered kilometer after kilometer down this one aorta of Bataan. Everything was reduced to a sameness of dirt and dust; our once sleek Packard and the most dilapidated busses which once had carried passengers on Manila streets; officers of rank and those whose life in the Army had been measured by the few weeks that separated the training camps of America from the port of Manila. Twice the column halted, frozen solid, bumper to bumper, while drivers deserted and leapt into the jungle. Our hearts almost stopped with the thought of the massacre that the enemy could have accomplished by even one single determined strafing attack down this packed life line. It was his incomparable opportunity to end the Bataan campaign before it started.

On another occasion the picture was thrown into confusion by drivers attempting to avoid a sudden shower of bombs. They were not from the sky, but from a heavily laden bomb truck which suddenly sprung its clamp supports and allowed a score of heavy bombs to cascade onto the roadway, to the terror of all in the vicinity. The fact that these bombs were not fused for action did not occur to the drivers in closest proximity. It was twenty minutes before traffic was moving again.

The sun was throwing long shadows when we arrived at a cleared space in the road where off to the right two heavy bulldozers and a carryall were obviously preparing an airfield. How familiar these surroundings were to become! This was Bataan Field. And from its red soil surface I was destined to take off one hot night just before dawn, not to set foot upon Bataan again before the flood of Japs finally overwhelmed the defending forces of sick, starved white men and Filipinos. A dust-covered figure in a helmet greeted us. It was Lieutenant Colonel Charles Backes. Colonel George arranged with him for the assistance of a large number of his grounded Philippine Army Air Corps personnel in

completing Bataan Field. At the moment the heavy equipment was engaged in filling in two large bomb craters about mid-field.

"They hit us just a while ago," exclaimed Lieutenant Colonel Backes. "It's kind of a naked feeling working on this field; they can get you before you can duck," he grunted.

We resumed our journey. I was growing extremely weary. It seemed as though my lungs would burst if I breathed any more of the flinty, earthen atmosphere. Truly they would burst if I didn't; so I did.

Now the road traced its choking way through an ever denser jungle. The height of the trees increased, and daylight softened into a premature dusk. Around left corners; around right curves; up hill and down, and then a cleared area and a great concentration of vehicles. We turned right and drove into an enclosed space containing a number of structures with clapboard sides.

"This is home—at least temporarily," announced Colonel George wearily.

That indication of weariness passed almost as soon as he uttered it. And in another moment he was interviewing a group of officers standing near by while Sergeant Dey and I got our belongings out of the car and took them into the largest of the structures.

This was "Little Baguio," the field camp of the Corps of Engineers. The Engineers, like the Ordnance people, had foreseen the Bataan campaign and shown their foresight by constructing military roads and this advance camp.

The place was truly an oasis in a sea of dirt and dust. Electric lights, a refrigerator! . . . Showers! On a little stand near the door now being prepared for night blackout precautions, a wizened, undernourished, anemic Christmas tree feebly supporting two or three dusty ornaments reminded us nevertheless that this was Christmas night.

The room and the corridor leading to the shower and sleeping rooms was crowded with officers, most of them displaying the twin-castles insignia of the Corps of Engineers. We became their guests, and it is to their credit generally that we were made to feel thoroughly welcome and at home, although obviously one of them, particularly the Area Engineer, was not at all pleased with his bur-

den of guests. On more than one occasion he indicated his displeasure. Apparently he was laboring under the illusion that peace-time conditions of comfort and preferential hospitality still obtain. At one time I heard him order that padlocks should be placed on the shower room to prevent their use by Air Corps personnel coming in from field missions and without knowledge of the location of their command posts, maintenance outfits, or billets. A shower bath was a Mecca that drew all; it was more than a luxury; it was a positive catharsis that cleansed the fog and bewilderment from the mind as it washed war's filth from the body. Catty or not, I conveyed this information to Colonel George. His word to the senior Engineer officer present had the effect of countering the selfish designs of the Area Engineer with his padlocks.

It was chow time, but the Colonel had work to do.

"Where are the men from the Headquarters company?" he demanded of the Headquarters adjutant standing near by.

That officer pointed to the east beyond the path that marked the crossing of the road. "Some of them are just over the road," he explained, "and a lot more of the boys are up the road half a kilometer taking baths at a Philippine Army camp."

Colonel George set off at once, explaining as he went: "We have got to find a good, defensible camp site at once and see that the boys have rations."

In the fading light of the late afternoon we crossed the road and penetrated a trail that ran gently downward, roughly to the east, toward Manila Bay.

"I don't like being too neighborly with those bodegas up there," he said, jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the Engineer camp area, where the corrugated-iron storehouses were scattered beneath the great trees. "They are full to the roof with ammunition. A bomb on one of them and . . ."

The trail became less distinct, but we proceeded a good half or three-quarters of a mile from the road. The trees reached far into the darkened sky here. Enormously tall, deeply foliated spires with huge corneous bases that shaped themselves into flared bastions at the surface of the jungle-matted earth. But here the air was sweet to smell, clean, and clear, uncontaminated by the dust

that covered the whole road area. The Colonel searched about like a terrier, then turned to our waiting group of members of the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the 5th Interceptor Command.

"This is not what we want," he said; "but it's the best we can do tonight and possibly for several nights. Do you agree?" He looked around the circle of strained dirty faces.

There was a murmur of approval.

"All right then. Dig in, boys. Remember, we are on this peninsula for the duration, God willing, and nobody is going to help us. What we don't know how to do, we must learn to do. Just keep it in mind every minute that while we may be fighting for the glory of good old Uncle Sam"—he paused and grinned, then shook his head and went on—"it might be more helpful in doing the things that have to be done if you just figure that you are fighting for the glory of living. . . . We are trying to save our lives," he finished simply. "We have got to protect ourselves against *ourselves* as well as the Japanese. That means you have got two big jobs to perform at once. One is your latrines. I'll tell you what they told us in France, and it was pretty good advice: 'Dig 'em deep, dig 'em wide.' "

There was a ripple of laughter around the group. It was good to hear these people unwind after the terrific tension of the past few days and hideous nights. The Colonel continued.

"The other is, dig your slit trenches. We've got to do that even before it gets dark. We will make that a rule. . . . We never halt for more than a few minutes but that we either locate adequate shelter at once or . . . Start digging, brother! Now what about rations?"

A census revealed that most of the men had been living on candy and a few supplies they had snatched when leaving Fort McKinley. Most of them still had enough to meet their immediate demands, unbalanced as the diet was. The field kitchens would arrive that night or early in the morning. There was no grumbling. Those who had, shared; those who had nothing, did not ask.

On the way back to the Engineer camp the Colonel explained

to me: "That's not a good camp site—one of the first requisites is water supply. I don't think there is any down there. We will have to carry it from the Engineer camp. Another factor against it is the fact that it's on descending ground with heavy foliage. That's bad if the Japanese should use gas. But I am forced to gamble cover against gas. I have chosen the trees."

Back in the Engineer camp building, we sat down to the tables laden with Army provender enriched by a few special dishes to celebrate Christmas. Truly that was manna from heaven. On one side of the room officers were clustered about the radio receiver catching the newscasts from Manila. Their faces were grim. The retreat from the south was complete. Manila was barren of protection. On the other side of the room Captain Sprague was shouting into a field telephone in an effort to acquaint Corregidor with the results of a reconnaissance completed by him and Captain Dyess, and was nonchalantly speaking of shooting down a Japanese fighter plane which at one time all but got him.

"Ed did it," he asserted, when I questioned him closely. "I didn't have a chance."

"Didn't you get in any shots at all?" I asked.

"Oh, I guess maybe I spat at him a couple of times. But Ed did it." And he precluded further conversation with an avid attack on his food.

I retired to the room assigned to Colonel George and myself. Captain Eads was going to sleep there too. Accordingly I found another room across the hall where I unrolled my mattress from Fort McKinley. Under the pale circle of blue light emitted by the blackout box over the small electric globe, I sat picturing the scene that must be occurring about that time in my home. The youngsters would be making a concerted invasion upon the gift-loaded Christmas tree, and their shouts of joy and surprise rang in my ears with a reality that forced me to put an end to this kind of meditation. After all, I had a gift too. I probed through my equipment and found the little package from Manila. I opened it and set the object in the middle of the little pool of blue light. It was a metal pipe stand from Heacock's, Manila's modern department store. I sat there on the floor regarding it for some time, but

thoughts it brought were unbearable. Taking my blackout flashlight, I went out into the night.

But it was not a night of calm and peace. This Christmas night, like the evening that preceded it, bespoke violence and sudden death. From the north came the distant muttering of artillery; from the west, the east, heavy explosions—that would be the Manila area. To the south the trees stood starkly against a pulsing sky. Over the crest of the mountain, somewhere between us and Corregidor a great French ship had been caught by some of those serene bombers we had seen that day. She was burning to death in Mariveles Bay.

Weary and dispirited, I crawled into my bed, flat down upon the wooden floor.

But Christmas Day was not at an end yet. Sleep was drifting in upon me when suddenly I found myself reaching into my clothes to the accompaniment of the rising and falling wail of a near-by siren. From the blackened compound of the camp we could hear the earth-trembling explosions and see the evil glittering far across the Bay toward Cavite and Manila. But no bombers appeared over our location. Possibly these were demolition parties still working to deny the enemy any useful object.

I retired again to fitful sleep punctuated by repeated dull thunder from the east.

Colonel George was silent during a breakfast so hasty that it was almost in the theoretical class. He had eaten little since yesterday morning, but there was an intensity about his eyes which warned against asking his consideration of "unimportant" things. Completing his almost aesthetic meal, he seized his Garand rifle and strode to the car, pausing only long enough to obtain from Captain Eads and some of the other officers in the vicinity directions to the various units which had come onto the Peninsula during the last twenty-four hours. He learned that the Philippine Army Air Force with about six hundred men was located near the Agricultural Experimental Station at Labao, and that three miles west the 27th Bomb Group could be found; four miles south of Pilar the 17th Squadron was in temporary location; between kilo-

meter posts 158 and 159 was some Air Corps outfit—possibly a matériel unit. The Philippine Air Depot also was in this vicinity, it was thought.

"I must locate them," he said as we went toward the car. "Most of these kids never have been on their own in conditions anything like this before. They don't know the first rudiments of establishing a camp, of protecting themselves against even ordinary camp hazards to their health, much less of ensuring ordinary comfort. There is no time to lose. What we do now can wreck even our chance for survival—to say nothing about organizing ourselves into a military force that will be useful to General MacArthur."

I started to get into the car, and he checked me. "I need you in too many ways these days," he smiled. "I need you to come with me and keep a record of what we do, thereby ensuring me in all this confusion against double-crossing my own orders and making it even worse for these fellows. But I also need help down here. I'll go and locate the outfits up the road and try to find decent camp sites for them. You stay here."

"I need two things without delay. First, the establishment of a radio communications net. Secondly, we must organize this temporary camp for ourselves here. This immediate area belongs to the Engineers. They've got a job to do. They can't do it if we clutter up their building and ground and equipment. Today you will act as my personal representative—executive officer, if you want to call it that—and do all you can to establish communication and organize the camp area. How you'll do it is your job . . . I'll be seeing you."

He left me quizzically eyeing the muzzle of my Springfield. That was something of an order for an individual who had had no infantry training, had never been inclined toward the rough-and-ready life, who had assiduously avoided anything that smacked of camping. True, I had been exposed to the routine summer training camps and had covered Army maneuvers as a war correspondent; but my military career, which had begun way back in 1911–12, when I was nominated the unofficial "mascot" of the 19th Infantry at Fort Meade, South Dakota, had involved little or nothing in the way of directional functions. On the contrary, those

originally commissioned in military intelligence achieved unenviable classification, almost automatically, as "military enigmas"—to put it in terms of my one-time superior, Lieutenant Colonel John Switzer in 6th Corps area. However, exposure to association with Colonel George meant an infusion of something of his spirit, if not his ability. There was a contagious element in the logical orderliness of his thinking, his cause-to-effect and thought-to-action concepts. "What's the problem?" was his familiar approach to a situation. Then outlining it, he would say: "What's to do about it?" Proposals would follow, then: "What's wrong with it? Punch it full of holes." And when the proposal emerged victorious, or an approved modification replaced it: "What do we do right now?"

I stowed my rifle in the room where I had slept, and where I had previously rerolled my bed and packed it out of the way. Then I made my way down the already dust-walled road to the relatively free area which led to the trail serving the new Headquarters Squadron camp area. Everywhere in little bunches, worn, dirty officers and men were knotted together standing, sitting on logs, or haunched low in the familiar "adobe squat" position. Heavily laden cars and trucks were parked indiscriminately. There was no plan, no effort at formulating one. Emulating the Colonel's application of logic to action, I tried to evaluate the scene before me and determine upon remedial action. I still was at a loss as to where to begin, but that moment it was decided for me, both where and what! From some place in the sky hidden by the towering Bataan trees came the faint beat of aviation motors.

Of course, the first thing was shelter! The time, at once!

I approached the first group. It was an Air Corps Signal outfit. An old regular with top sergeant's stripes saluted. As if the motion put a thought into my head, an idea came to me fully formed.

"Sergeant," I said, "you look to me like old-line."

He nodded. His hairy chest stiffened with pride. "Yes, sir," he acknowledged from the depths of his sturdy trunk. "This is not anything new to me; I had eighteen months in France." Then he turned and cast a quick puzzled look on both sides of him and added: "But it's a little different here."

"Yes, sergeant, and that's just where we need your help so badly."

His eyes opened. I had learned something from Colonel George; he never indicated that *he* would do a job, it was always *we* were doing a job together. Maybe that was it; on the other hand maybe it was just because I looked upon this old experienced soldier as the answer to my unuttered prayers. We, every one of us, did need men like him and need them without reservation or consideration of disparity in rank.

"We can expect enemy planes, either reconnaissance or dive bombers, over this area any moment," I said. "Will you take charge of this group and show them all you can about cover, emergency camouflage, and shelter, and when you have done that, see what can be done toward the organization of a temporary bivouac area?"

To each group in turn I paid a visit for the purpose of uncovering all such possible gems as I had in the sergeant. Fortunately, nearly every one possessed an old-line noncommissioned officer. Where commissioned officers were present, I asked them aside and explained Colonel George's instructions, making the suggestion that they take advantage of their old experienced noncoms to bring about order and protection for their helpless charges. Anxiously I watched the skies, but that first ominous drone apparently was not for us. By noontime, the reconnaissance plane did fly over; but by that time not a truck or car was baldly exposed to air observation, as at daylight. All were under trees or covered by freshly cut boughs. Temporary but as yet shallow slit trenches were appearing throughout the area.

A hundred yards from the road deep within the protecting confines of a jungle thicket the Signal Corps outfit was establishing a transmitting and receiving station. A hundred yards south of this, one of the powerful radio type SCR 297's already was going into action, and the pump of its engine-driven generator was a welcome sound to our ears. In a clearing not far from the road two old-line sergeants were demonstrating to a group of threescore men squatting and lying on the ground before them the intricacies, dependabilities, abuses, and uses of the service automatic.

Yes, uses!

It is doubtful if more than fifteen of the sixty officers and men present ever had fired a .45-caliber service automatic. Most of them would have found this weapon more useful as a club, inasmuch as the multiple safety devices were completely unknown to them; they would not have known which gadget to press first! While they did their experimental probings, the finely trained Japanese opponent could have approached at his leisure, rolled a cigarette, read the morning paper, and probably finished his shaving before bothering to dispatch the perplexed American warrior before him. Nevertheless, of such material was made the First F.E.A.F. Combat team which was destined to meet and beat into the earth these same finely trained and perfectly equipped Japanese foemen at Agloloma Point a short month later.

Cutting across the not too academic but highly virile explanation being delivered by the sergeant came a new sound. It was the rapid exhaust of a portable gasoline-driven generator for producing current to operate the radio outfit down the trail. I slipped away to discover that the crew of this unit, a signal section of the 3rd Pursuit Group, had literally hewn their way into the jungle and, after establishing an antenna by a means known only to themselves, were initiating their tests. The unit was mounted in an open two-wheel trailer. Seated on an empty ammunition case tall, slender, quiet capable Sergeant Kelly worked his sensitive fingers over the black key, adjusting a condenser with the other hand. The pitch of the little generator hidden in the thickets twenty feet away dropped a note or two as it took the load. It was not an emergency matter that we establish contact that very moment, yet there was an atmosphere of tension as we fixed our attention on the transmitter and its operator. Somehow, to reestablish contact with our outfits—any outfit—would provide an invisible moral support as intangible as it was real.

7 W A . . . 7 W A . . . 7 W A . . . de 9 M N. . . . 7 W A . . .  
7 W A . . . 7 W A . . . de 9 M N. . . .

He flipped a stand-by switch, and with his long fingers adjusted the main tuning condenser. Carefully he monitored the range. Then

shook his head and, reversing the stand-by switch, thumbed out the call again. We were conscious of disappointment. Yet each man tempered this, for no true radio man honestly expects results immediately. Suddenly as he stopped on one dial point, the sergeant seized his pencil and wrote quickly. Then acknowledged, and turned to us.

"That's 7 W A, Fort Mills on Corregidor," he said. "His signal is very weak. I am sure it is not the main transmitter. Just a minute." Again his pencil moved over the message form. And, another acknowledgment.

"He says the Jap bombers have been slapping around," the sergeant explained. "He's got some auxiliary station going some place in a concealed position on Middleside."

That was disturbing news. We knew Corregidor had been the target of rough treatment, but this was the first indication that really serious damage might have been done. Of course, structures on Topside would suffer in any aerial bombardment.

The sergeant signed off with 7 W A and began a new call: this time P U 4, Orani Field. Clear and resonant, the signal came back. Excellent! Now we had at least a north-and-south communication axis. Half an hour later we raised Labao just as Captain Sprague reported in at the 21st Pursuit camp. The call was 8 R S. Hard on 8 R S's heels came in J 8 5, Pilar Field. With each new successful call our spirits mounted. No longer were we nagged by that lost, isolated sensation; there were *friends* on all sides of us. Yes, truly on all sides, for now a sharp clear call in the precise staccato keying of a good Filipino operator whistled out of the speaker grill. This time it was 9 X D, a unit to the southeast between us and Corregidor, in the vicinity of Mariveles.

The big 297 set hidden in the jungle to the south of us punched a full load of milliamperes into the ether and registered on the receivers six hundred miles to the south, at Del Monte Field, Mindanao. And Del Monte was in communication with Darwin, Australia! Oh, boy! Life wasn't so bad, after all.

Somehow that trite phrase "the magic of radio" lost its provincialism. This was true magic that spanned the enemy-girt land around us and joined hands with friends far beyond the horizons.

We didn't know it then, but the big 297 had KGEI, San Francisco, on its special receiver that very morning. Of course, that was purely one-way. It was a good report that I was able to render to the dust-plated Colonel George upon his return that evening.

"We need nothing more than communications," he said, "and that's a good start. Have they arranged their listening schedules? We'll need twenty-four-hour coverage." I explained that the boys then were endeavoring to agree on schedules, but it was not an easy thing since none of them had had sleep for the past thirty hours, and only that afternoon had they had their first substantial meal in the same period.

Yes, we had had our first chow on Bataan. Luckily the merciful impenetrability of the future prevented a flash of what the last chow on Bataan would be like. But that future, whatever it might be, could not have held grim proportions for us just then. Every man's mess kit had been filled to overflowing with succulent Virginia ham, potatoes, peas, bread, and canned fruits, coffee, canned cream, and sugar. Truly this was the stuff of which festivals were made. The portable pressure gasoline cookers roared heat into the food and enforced starvation combined with healthy bodies to effect a heavenly occasion in the heart of this Bataan jungle. War wasn't so bad, not when the old tummy began to feel nice and tight and bulging. What th' hell! The Jap was still fifty or sixty miles north of Clark Field, and Clark Field was sixty or seventy miles north of us. Why, he might just as well be in Formosa for all he could bother us. Officers and men alike formed the long line leading to the three fifty-gallon fuel drums, now water-filled and resting over an improvised pipe grate under which a brisk fire communicated its sterilizing heat and thus provided an efficient mess-kit washing and sanitation unit.

From then on till dusk the jungle was busy with the multitude of little sounds that told of camp activities to provide bomb shelter, sleeping shelter, and sanitation for our particular company of two hundred men. Other units were near by, but we could not see them.

That evening in the Engineer building Colonel George chuckled as he related to me the day's events.

"I made a Christian of him, I did," he grinned. "I'll bet he sleeps tonight."

"He" was Major Sewell of the 27th Bomb Group.

"The boys were pretty low in their spirits," the Colonel explained. "They just sort of dropped down where they found themselves when they left the road; no security, no water . . . I couldn't leave them there, and I couldn't tell them any better place until I'd looked for one myself. So I told Major Sewell we were going for a walk."

He grinned, and I knew well enough what that meant, for there was not a lad in our whole outfit who could boast of greater endurance on the trail or more skill in woodcraft than this sinewy little man. There, he was in his element. He loved it. From nature he gained knowledge, strength, inspiration. "Folks may sort of get you down now and then," he'd say; "and maybe that's because you sort of let folks down. What you need then is a little nature treatment." On the trail he was merciless. His pace was never a walk, but the quick-tempoed lithe half-run of the Indian. I knew full well that, when he said he had taken Major Sewell for a walk, that was precisely what he hadn't done. He had taken him for a grueling mountain run, up hill, down valley and across jungle. But they'd found what they wanted—a perfect site with ample room, good cover, excellent defense possibilities, and a clear mountain stream running through the very center of it.

"Tomorrow I'll go back and show them a few tricks about camp craft," he explained; "but they'll learn fast." Then he added with a wide grin: "They've got to. We've too many men on this narrow piece of real estate in the same fix as this morning."

"Then you propose to find sites for all of them?" I asked.

"I was born to be outdoors," he explained. "Some of our people are as able to take care of themselves as I am, but not many. Maybe teaching them to be Boy Scouts isn't quite the role I envisioned for myself in my fondest moments of thinking that some day I might command a major Air Force outfit, but—here we are, and it looks like here we stay."

"It would seem you did your good turn today, all right," I

commented, as we prepared to turn in before the blackout lamps were fairly alight.

"I made a Christian of him."

I heard his chuckle muffle itself in the depths of his pillow.

### *Mariveles reconnaissance*

That smoke yesterday. Convoy drivers as black as the night through which they had come told stories of the earth-smashing explosions that ripped through what was left of our military installations from port area to the hook of Cavite. General Casey and his indefatigable denizens of destruction gave awful meaning to the scorched-earth policy and wrote it in leaping flame across the pulsing skies. If anything of value or use to the Japanese still remained in the Manila area—and far beyond, for that matter—it was because its whereabouts was unknown to this fighting bundle of energy. Paradoxical it is—but then all war is a paradox—that warmest commendation must go to General Casey for the destruction of our own installations. But how much greater our tribulations would have proved without the superlative campaign and demolitions carried out under his planning and direction!

There was one contribution in this vast orchestra of destruction that he had not outlined. Sabotage was credited with a devastating blaze which consumed huge warehouses in the Pandacan district of Manila.

Today as we emerged from the Engineer mess building, there was a new roll of smoke across the heavens. It followed a night in which the siren again had screamed its warning (in vain, as far as I was concerned, for in my weariness I had arrived at the decision to let come what might come—I was much too tired to rouse out of my makeshift bed on the floor). From some distant point the siren raised its moan. We were not sure from where the warning came—possibly Corregidor. We listened in vain for motors, flying high; but there was borne to our ears a sound equally sinister—that thudding roll, the voice of hate from above. It could not be from Manila, for that day the radio had officially declared Manila

defenseless—an "open city"—to ensure it against Japanese wrath from the air.

Colonel George already was in the car.

"Repeat your program for the day," he directed. "I'm off to locate the rest of our outfits and will also report in to General McBride, somewhere up around kilometer post 158."

I was more than vaguely uneasy about our own camp site. It was not the lack of water that concerned me, although that was a factor of discomfort and great inconvenience. It was gas, which the Japanese had not used so far in our almost-three-weeks-old war but might use before the war was actually three weeks old. And gas, unloaded in this area, would drift down that incline into the jungle thickets in a deadly all-pervading flood that would mean horrible agonized death for untold numbers of our inexperienced, untrained personnel, many of whom would never live to properly adjust the unfamiliar masks over their faces.

Lieutenant Burt Schwartz produced a staff car and an idea. He knew of a promising spot at the base of the road that zigzagged steeply down through the great tall trees to the Mariveles area. He said it was a hundred and fifty yards past the junction of the Mariveles cutoff at the base of rock-turreted hills. Down the hill we turned to the right, and found ourselves in a rugged area that seemed to offer excellent cover against bombing attacks or strafing from all directions, and was bisected by a stream whose lush music was sweet upon our ears. Suddenly that music was dominated by a bass crescendo, and our retreat from the still-moving car was as precipitate as it was diverse in individual directions. Low over the gaunt ribs of Mariveles Mountain a flight of nine bimotored bombers slid down the invisible skyways with sinister design.

*Crash . . . crash . . . crash!* In bellowing unison an antiaircraft battery—so close that the leaves of trees over us shuddered to each concussion—burst into frenzied indignation at this cheeky invasion of their front-door privacy.

Over our heads the shells whined like angry bees away into the blue. Then the cottonlike bursts.

Close in, this time! Good slugging! Give 'em the other barrel. Exactly that and more, the unseen guns did give them. In our

enthusiasm the thought that the battery might draw tons of explosives down on our unprotected heads never entered those same heads.

*Bang, bang . . . wham-m!*

Two of the guns in this four-gun battery had fired together. They had also altered direction to take the bombers under their sights. We were in direct line with the blast, and for a moment it seemed that we too must have been included. This time the shells roared as they drilled holes into the blue atmosphere and terminated their wild flight in vicious twin explosions.

We leapt up and howled our approval, for this time the exploding shrapnel was much too close for aeronautical comfort. Apparently upon signal, the whole flight banked sharply and paid off to the east. From the right-wing plane of the V a trail of white smoke plumed straight and solid. Again we howled. The big silver tormenter far above us lost speed. And we danced with excitement.

The guns roared with renewed fury. Four more cotton balls blossomed in the blue. But as if it had been frightened back into a realization of its lagging purpose, the apparently injured enemy suddenly recovered and to our dismay regained place in the formation as the flight was lost to us over the distant rise of the mountain. Not even the plume of smoke remained.

Was Fortune never to favor us? Was the enemy always to escape, even when the conditions were favorable to us and the shooting good? Weak with disappointment and reaction, we cast uninterested eyes over what had appeared to be a camp spot of excellent potentialities. The raid had shown us one error in our judgment: the enemy was not afraid of antiaircraft and, if it suited his purpose, would fly in low. Instead of being a naturally protected area, this little valley might actually prove to be a semi-enclosed deathtrap. At the moment we did not know that it had already been surveyed by numerous wandering parties, and that every spot really possessing the characteristics we desired already had been appropriated. A permanent installation of the Philippine Scouts lay two hundred yards farther up the stream; at an equal distance towards Mariveles was a Signal Corps installation, "Rock" switchboard. The screened-in green wooden building was being

evacuated. This busy central switchboard now was concealed in thick foliage at some distance from the structure. Although we could hear the staccato speech of the efficient Filipino operators, we actually were unable to locate the board except by careful tracing of the sound.

Adjacent to the hidden board a group of Filipino laborers had excavated a ditch, and were bearing thereto sections of drain pipe.

"Look," said Lieutenant Schwartz. "A nice trench already dug, in case we need it. . . . And we *do*."

He carried this last sentence with him as he made a flying leap through the air and disappeared into the depths of the trench. His warning was lost on the rest of us, who were making similar excursions. The earth jumped. Again. And again. . . .

Bombs this time.

But . . . Yes, there they were, nine of them. Almost overhead again before we saw them. The antiaircraft battery whammed its quadruple defiance. We could not see the bursting shells. From the south a new series of explosions beat deeper thunder into the din.

Queer, that; we had seen no bombs leave the bellies of the silver fish flying about us. Not even now. Yet the percussion section to the south of us continued its hoarse solo.

Now I saw them. There were two flights. The original nine had wheeled sharply east at the unwelcome attention of the hidden antiaircraft battery. But it had swung back in. Apparently its objective was the Mariveles Naval area just below us.

There was a queer quality to the explosion sounds of some of the bombs—as if they were exploding in the depths of deep barrels. A muffled, confined thump rather than the rolling thunder of the usual explosion and the sharp crack of antiaircraft guns.

We shook the dirt out of our clothes and clambered out of the trench. Apparently the enemy was not interested in this particular objective, although every second was pregnant with the possibility that the searching bombardiers above would sight the green building in the cross hairs and press the release button with the idea of sending it skywards. After all, their objective folders must have mentioned it as an important communications center to

be destroyed, thus crippling our wire channels not only from Corregidor but from the entire hastily established setup at the south end of the peninsula.

We regained the car only to find that in the effort to conceal it under trees the driver had run it hard aground on a high-centered rock which had forced the flywheel pan housing firmly against the gear which ordinarily engages the starter. Like it or not, we could either spend time adjacent to this natural target, or turn to and help the driver free the fouled flywheel. We decided on the latter. Twice before the job was completed we found it desirable to renew our acquaintanceship with the trench bottom. The Japanese were having another field day. Black smoke was soaring skyward from the Naval area.

With the car once more under motion we endeavored to penetrate the area, but sentries with smoke-blackened faces waved us back.

"Ammunition may go," bawled one of them, jerking his bayonet in the direction of a frame building. It was not the only structure that had tasted the violence of the bombers. Half a dozen columns of smoke whooped into the air to the accompaniment of climbing fire. In the bay a small craft of some type was barely visible in her death agonies of fire, smoke, and water.

The explanation of the peculiar-sounding explosions revealed itself. In this low-drained area the earth was of a peculiar loamy consistency with a moisture content that rendered it easily plastic. Many of the bombs had penetrated several feet before their set fuses had ignited the explosive charge. The result was a geyser-like explosion, almost straight up, and with practically no dispersion above the surface of the earth. One bomb had ripped through the side eaves of a building. Yet the force of the blast was so nearly vertical that the structure was otherwise undamaged. The descending bomb had literally created its own gun barrel, then exploded in a concentrated line along the very trail it had come. This unusual characteristic of the soil in the vicinity of Mariveles granted an unexpected relative immunity from damage to the oft-bombed installation.

We turned and regained our altitude up the zigzag trail. Peace had descended upon the stately forest. Our nerves, jangled a little, found balm in this momentary return to nature. How absurd, how completely unnecessary seemed the determination of man to exterminate his kind! Here in the cool depths of the virginal jungle, as we rose higher, the air was clean and clear, relieved of the parboiled moisture of the sea level.

Our cool, clean camp site, high on the ridge, breathed of health and comfort. We would put our money against the enemy for a few days in a wager that he would not use gas. But we would stay up here.

Late that afternoon I determined to move out of the Engineer building. A pyramidal tent had been erected for Colonel George, Captain Eads, Captain Sprague, and myself in the camp area. But again my penchant for living the solitary life influenced me to unload my kit outside the camp area between the camp and the road, at a point perhaps thirty yards from the portable Signal Corps outfit. With a knife I bored my way into a tightly leafed arbor, an isolated patch of dense foliage, roughly ten yards square. With a hand ax borrowed from the Signal Corps boys and a fistful of nails obtained from the Engineer camp, I contrived a sort of frame which was to be my "bedspring"; the side pieces were formed from the bole of a small sapling, the laterals being branches and miscellaneous jungle pieces of suitable diameter. It was crude, but at least it raised my matteress a few inches from the ground—an earth prolific with busy spiders, ants, winged insects and, at one time during the late afternoon, two small snakes.

That evening I pushed aside a scum of living and dead insects floating in water of a newly filled drum not far from the Engineer water head. It had an odor, and was warm; but it was wet, and I was powerfully dirty. Into my mind came the tantalizing picture of the glass-and-tile shower room of No. 3 Military Plaza.

Late in the warm evening I sat on the edge of my improvised bed entering notes in my diary. The multiple voices of the jungle spoke to me on every hand. I was not quite so sure now that my policy of "splendid isolation" really possessed all the advantages I had

envisioned, and was glad when the hour arrived for the Signal Corps unit to establish communications and the staccato chatter of its little gasoline-driven generator kept me company.

Hanging from a branch within easy reach, my "peewee" radio was tuned to a Manila broadcast frequency. A Strauss waltz dissolved into the grim voice of an announcer describing the death and destruction that had been visited upon the city that day by repeated waves of Japanese bombers unharried by any form of defense. With ruthless precision they had seared a broad trail of fire and chaos across portions of the walled city and beyond. All too frequently, stupid propaganda of all countries declares in exaggerated indignation that only schools and hospitals have been the deliberate target of hostile bombers, until listeners of the most ordinary intelligence are convinced that such targets outnumber legitimate military targets by a dozen to the block and accordingly discount the propaganda for what it is worth—which is practically nothing. But we were to know that this announcer spoke the truth. Whether the enemy intended only to terrorize, or whether he deliberately sent his bombs crashing into one of the oldest churches in Manila, Santo Domingo, killing maiming, and destroying, we shall never know. I reached over and turned off the little radio with its burden of agonizing news from Manila—the "open city."

### *Sunday December 28th*

Our first Sunday on Bataan. How many more will there be?

We had opportunity to make a practical inspection of the 27th Bomb Group's just organized messing facilities and had no alternative to pronouncing them excellent. Certainly Major Sewell was an apt pupil of Colonel George's "Christianizing" process. In the few moments before we left, the Colonel instructed him to organize his outfit on an infantry basis and assign his officers accordingly.

"Let me know how many rifles you need to equip your entire outfit," he said, "and also your .30 ammunition requirements. Be prepared at once to move out and carry with you seven days' rations."

Major Sewell's eyebrows went up.

"Yes, sir, but—"

"The order from the Rock is for you to be prepared to board ship for Mindanao. Right now it appears that we shall be going south in an effort to hold that island as a base for air operations against occupied Luzon as soon as we receive air reinforcements from Australia."

This was news! I had been with the Colonel all day long, and he had not spoken once about it. Later, when I caught his eye, I took the liberty of conveying my opinion of his secretiveness.

"Am I too young to know these things, or are you just being smug?" I muttered in an aside to him.

He grinned. "You will like Mindanao."

"Oh, then, we go too. It was nice of you to mention it before the ship left."

A grin was his only answer.

## Trial by fire

Monday December 29th.

Alas, we do not go to Mindanao! Nor does the equally luckless 27th Bomb Group.

Early this morning the Colonel was on the field telephone, first to Mariveles. And then to the Rock. It was the Rock that blasted our hopes. Mariveles declared that two ships would be standing in at evening prepared to take us off. But General Sutherland's crisp voice over the telephone clipped our wings closer with each fresh phrase. Only one ship was available—a familiar interisland vessel, the *Mayon*. She would go south and probably would not return. She had capacity for one outfit only, and it was agreed that that outfit would be the 19th Bomb Group. It would be ready to embark by 2000 hours that night. Between six hundred and six hundred and fifty officers and men would be taken.

And that was that!

I was surprised at the ease with which I accepted the disappointment. Dear me! Was I becoming something of a philosopher?

Or was it just a return of that protective insulation against shock? Rather the latter. Philosophic acceptance implies a tacit agreement with environment based at least in part upon some prompting of inner faith. No, definitely it was not that!

On other points General Sutherland found himself more compatibly situated. Originally it had been planned to move Philippine Army Air Corps units to the Mariveles area. Colonel George hoped to station these people at Bataan Field. The Rock authorized the move without delay. Agreement also was reached with antiaircraft commanders regarding the moves of their batteries if the enemy pressed us too strongly either by ground from the north, or through air threats to our only even semipermanent field—Bataan. In this four-way conference by telephone, carried on within the cool depths of the forest at the site of Major Breitung's concealed battery below Little Baguio, Colonel Sage and Colonel Peck coordinated tentative moves which would converge retreating batteries toward Bataan Field and the vicinity of Cabcaben, where we planned another airfield just south of the Bataan strip. The batteries at Hermosa would remain there as long as this territory was tenable. Then a withdrawal would be made through Orani and Pilar.

Somehow as we planned these moves on the map, there was an air of detachment. It was almost as though we were running through one of the familiar Gettysburg map problems for paperwork credit. Surely it was farsighted of the Colonel to consider moves conditioned by the possible approach of the enemy to such a threatening proximity as that! Alas! Even a pessimistic attitude would have underestimated the nearness of the date when those theoretical contingencies would assume grim reality and Hermosa would be a target for our own artillery and bombs, because of the harbor it offered to the invading hordes from the north.

It was nearing midday when the first wave of the familiar dual-engined bombers came over. Their unwelcome visit was announced by a progressing tumult down the length of the peninsula. First, far up, these same batteries at Hermosa opened. Then battery after battery down the rugged flank roared its hostile salutation to the serenely moving V, delicately resting against the flawless blue of the sky.

Now Major Breitung's hidden watchdogs split the air with concerted might. Tiny white blossoms burst far up in the heart of the blue.

The shooting looked good. But from our level—a worm's-eye view, as it were—judgment of accuracy as to height was impossible. Apparently, to the little brown eyes that peered intently from beneath flying helmets within those almost microscopic silver bombers, the level of bursts was not such as to warrant an order to alter course.

With unmoved precision, the sinister V with legs of unequal length wedged through the sky in a long, wide wheel over the Mariveles area.

Now they paraded into a steady-coursed line to the southeast. This must be the bomb-release approach.

Yes, there they were: those tiny black dots hurtling downward in a long forward-sweeping arc.

Our eyes lost them in the distance. The miniature airplanes far over Corregidor paid off to the south of the island amid a fleecy garden of white puffballs that drifted into curious shapes and dissolved. The guns on the island pumped new ones into the air. Still no explosions from the bombs. Maybe they were duds. Maybe the—

Suddenly our eyes were caught by a ripping glitter about half-way up the dark flank of the island. Middleside . . . The earth seemed to swell in a black-brown bubble that rose higher and higher with ponderous, sluggish motion—then wearied and collapsed—only to gather itself for a new thrust, this time steep and concentrated.

Then the scene was blurred by the uprush of black smoke. . . . And a new ripple of brilliant flame higher up on the island.

For a moment we did not understand. Then our fascinated eyes lifted. Paying off in the tracks of the first wave, a second V of bombers had laid its deadly eggs and then executed a maneuver which would bring them back over the target from a new direction.

The pillaring smoke of the first fires was whooped aside by the savagery of the second. A giant, fat-bellied orange, a hundred yards

across, lifted in upheaving arms of smoke, hung suspended for a long moment, and sucked itself dry from inside. The ground beneath us chattered to the immensity of the explosion on distant Corregidor across two miles of water.

This was no nuisance raid. This was the real thing, deadly and enormously destructive.

Then they approached from a different point. Already the black dots were falling. Our eyes followed them with painful fascination. Down . . . down . . .

High up on Topside the long white scar that was the sturdy concrete structure of the main barracks spat swift jets of dirty gray smoke from a thousand sudden fractures. We waited for the thunder. And like a crack of doom it came, a gigantic wheel of sound rolled heavily over ocean and mountain alike, making the earth tremble with its passing.

It was then that we noticed that one of the V's was no longer intact. Somewhere on the south side of the island one of them had met a puffball squarely. And found it to be more than mere harmless smoke. Within its cottony interior ragged chunks of steel screamed out and through.

Good. . . . Good! But there was little rejoicing. It would take many hits like that one even to approach repayment of the terrific damage these enemies had created on Corregidor's stricken torso.

Then they departed. One by one the antiaircraft batteries ceased their clamor and sank into sullen silence.

But only to reawaken to sudden life.

Another attack!

This time the sky was no longer blue, but a mottled gray, and rolling black where Corregidor rose, a gigantic funeral pyre for more than a score of gun-crew members buried under tons of debris in an improvised bomb shelter. More than a hundred already had been wounded. The antiaircraft batteries furiously hammered their whining shells into the troubled sky. Their pace of fire was terrific. But the bombers came on steadily.

Then they approached along the same line.

But this time the gunners had laid the point. Fair among the hitherto serene flight a cluster of shells popped into being. The

bomber on the leader's left wing faltered, dropped below the altitude line of flight. There was a brush of white smoke from his port engine. He dropped lower. But he went on.

Then the dots, like wet paint running, detached themselves from the silver shapes. Down . . . down . . .

That time the objective was a dual one. In simultaneous bursts of fire the bombs burst at a point close to the water line, seemingly near the dock area, and high up on Topside again. From the dock area an inverted shower of meaningless shapes ascended into the smoke-burdened air. Fattening red and orange flames raced for the heights. A fuel dump of some kind. A small vessel standing off the shore a short distance seemed to flatten and grow smaller while a thin white haze formed her death veil and shrouded her from sight.

For three crazy hours the man-made storm of lightning and thunder raged over the now almost obscured island. And long after the last enemy bomber had droned back into the north, the symbols of his hostile visit continued to mount blackly into the sky that had brought him.

That evening our jungle-hidden station tried in vain to reach the Rock's communication center. The field telephones also were useless. The cable had been ripped up by the hits in the dock area.

Would anyone go to Mindanao now? Surely the enemy must have spotted the *Mayon*, wherever she was trying to hide herself until nightfall. The sun was sinking through an uneasy pall of smoke when a reassuring word came through. The *Mayon* was safe. She would leave on schedule.

Before she did, I entrusted to Lieutenant L. L. Wade a package of secret codes from Captain Wing, passing them in turn from Colonel Morse for General Sharp, commanding the forces in the south. Lieutenant Wade was the cabinmate of my friend of happier days, Lieutenant Arter, also leaving. Lieutenant Wade was not destined to leave the ship alive. At one point in her dash to the south she was cornered by Japanese bombers. Repeatedly they swung low to attack. The *Mayon* was defenseless. But she maneuvered herself out of death's fingers. The near-misses smashed water and air with tremendous concussions. Shellshocked into ir-

responsible panic, Lieutenant Wade leapt overboard. He was rescued, but died a day later.

*Tuesday December 30th*

A night of restless sleep terminated at dawn with the long-continued popping of the gasoline engine-driven generator. I emerged from my sylvan chrysalis—albeit there was nothing of the butterfly about me, for indeed I was disorderly and heavy from my indifferent rest, punctuated by subconscious reconstructions of the fiery scenes of the day. I dressed and walked through the gathering light to the Signal Corps station.

"We've reestablished communication with the Rock, sir," announced the sergeant on duty. His face looked grim in the shaded light of the receiving panel. "They really plastered the boys over there yesterday," he continued in a low voice. "Somewhere between forty and sixty killed and about a hundred and twenty-five wounded. Quite a few of them bad. Guess they blew out most of Topside, and for a while there was a rumor that they had got General MacArthur and General Sutherland and most everybody else, including Mrs. MacArthur and the boy. Later they told us that the General's party had entered a bombproof just in time; but the General and two of his faithful Filipino orderlies had been out in the thick of it. At one time they protected him with their bodies. To the great relief of his wife and the staff, he returned all O.K. and told them all about what type planes the Japs had, and how they maneuvered 'em."

"They'd give plenty to get him," I commented. "And if they could get both him and General Sutherland, I am afraid our picture would be as bad as we could imagine. What about material damage?"

"Worst yet," he said cryptically. "Topside is a mess, but what's worse, they got a lot of our fuel supplies. One report said they had knocked out a power station permanently, but this was incorrect. Everybody's gone underground; they are all livin' in Malinta tunnel."

It was a dismal beginning to the day. I reported the essence of the operator's report to Colonel George, explaining that this was not official but merely operators' chatter. Still, no one could have witnessed that terrific trial by fire without the conviction that here was wholesale destruction let loose over a broad area.

"They've taken an awful beating, all right," commented the Colonel; "but this is the sort of thing for which we've been building for the past twenty years. The old Rock can take a lot of what we saw yesterday and still be unharmed in vital spots. There's only one thing we really can't afford to lose, and that is aviation gasoline. We haven't enough now to sustain more than one big B-17 bombing mission should one be organized from the south. I understand the Navy still has some at Mariveles, and there is some in barges somewhere out in the Bay."

Yes, there was a good bit of aviation fuel at Mariveles when he spoke.

But that night there was none.

At almost the identical hour that had brought the first onslaught against Corregidor the day before, a wave of bi-engined bombers appeared over Mariveles and thundered upon the port area for half an hour. As unerringly as they had done in so many previous cases—Cavite, Sandy Point, Corregidor—they planted high explosives exactly and repeatedly in the fuel-dump section, exploding ammunition and sending another precious quota of our fast-diminishing gasoline supply into the smoke-clouded heavens. At that rate we should be crippled before we could get organized to fight back.

We were told of two tank-cars of aviation gasoline on the siding near Labao. That would be about eighty thousand gallons. The Colonel dispatched a party at once to investigate. Their report was disheartening. However, it was gasoline, if not aviation high-test gasoline. Heaven knew, we should need all the Quartermaster gasoline we could get to operate ration trucks and ammunition carriers.

It was officially announced from the Rock today that the Far Eastern Air Force had been transferred to Australia—or at least wherever General Brereton finally pitched tent. Colonel George

officially was named Commanding Officer of the 5th Interceptor Command.

The news emitted by my peewee radio that night held about an even balance, the apparent stemming of the tide in the north being offset by an ominous advance from the south. Why shouldn't the enemy advance from the south? The southern Luzon forces either had been withdrawn or then were withdrawing as rapidly as transport made possible to complete the movement around through Manila northward toward Bataan Peninsula.

Bataan Peninsula. . . .

*Wednesday December 31st*

"Tomorrow the outfit will break camp and move up on the ridge," announces Colonel George. "You'll like it up there; nice and clean and cool, and high enough to be out of gas danger because there is a constant wind, and far enough away from the ammunition bodegas to be out of the area of accidental hits through bad bombing."

"Water?" I asked, anxious to show that I had learned my camp-craft lessons from him. The result is unexpected.

"There you are, Hal," he says, turning to Captain Eads in mock despair. "We tramp our legs down to the knees to find him the closest thing to heaven we've seen in years, and now he won't have it because it hasn't got hot and cold running water and maid service."

"Well, I—" I begin, a little nonplused. But the Colonel's laugh waves me down.

"Forget it," he chuckles. "I was just trying to cover up. No, as a matter of fact, it does not have running water. But it will have!" he amends quickly.

"In that case I'd better go to Manila to get that pipe and the shower heads, Colonel," says Lefty, strapping on his gun belt. "Do I have your permission, sir?"

"Manila!" I exclaim. "Tonight?"

Lefty nods. "You gotta have hot and cold running water, don't you?" he grins. "Do I have your permission, Colonel?"

"You do not," barks Colonel George. "But if I don't see you around here within the next five or ten minutes, I'll know you've gone without it," he says, deliberately avoiding our eyes. "Guess I didn't hear you."

Lefty winks ponderously, cocks his finger in salute to the Colonel's averted face, and slips out into the night.

"Wild horse, that fella," chuckles Colonel George. "Funny, I got an idea he may try to get into Manila tonight—just an idea. Must tell him not to risk it. He might meet Nips dancing at the Manila Hotel."

"What's this about, anyway?" I demanded.

"Well, we're piping water from the Engineers' source to the new camp. But to erect shower platforms, Lefty figures he needs shower heads and some other plumbing fixtures. Says he knows where some are in Manila. He aims to get them."

And get them he did. Literally from under the noses of the first Japanese to enter the south end of the city.

With night closed down, I return to my "apartment." The piercing, whistling scream of a night bird at the edge of the jungle startles me. But the popping of the little gasoline engine gives me reassurance of human companionship not too far away.

I reach out to turn the knob of the peewee. Then, farther. I rock it back and forth. The breathing sound assures me that the set is alive.

But not one of the Manila stations is on the air.

I stare at the little instrument in the shrouded light of a torch. Its complete silence, unexplained and unexpected, is heavily ominous.

I seat myself on the protruding edge of the rustic bed frame at the foot and stare at the starlighted heavens.

New Year's Eve. . . .

I am conscious of a low, continuous rumble the horizon around, from east to north. Occasionally the stars pale to a momentary flicker of brilliance beyond the black jungle in front of me. Manila is over there.

Bombs, demolitions or artillery?

I pick up the little black book and begin to write again:

It is New Year's Eve. Remember the last one at Selfridge Field? My wife was with me. God bless her. In the Officers' Club where the usual year-end party was in swing we were making much noise; clackers, poppers, squealers, whistles, and lots and lots of hooting. I remember Colonel and Mrs. George over there by the door leading to the little south lounge room. He was in his full blue uniform, laughing and chatting with Mrs. George at his side. Yes, there was much noise. But it was as artificial as it was dinful. Our raillery was forced. There was a grimness behind our welcoming of this year 1941. Truly coming events had cast their shadows before. And we felt it closing in around us like a cold mist.

Frankly it is here. Everything we secretly dreaded. Now what?

There are hellish days ahead. We know that.

Then what?

Either everlasting peace—or a chance to try again. Somehow, in the grimness of reality, anticipation has become one of fatalism from day to day.

I tuck the little book in my musette bag hanging from a near-by branch, and prepare to pull the mosquito net around my "bed."

And suddenly I'm sitting bolt upright. I have heard my name sung from the black depths of the jungle.

"Here!" I shout.

A shadowy form blots out the stars as it stumbles toward my guiding voice.

"Letter, sir," says a husky voice from the top of the shadow. "Some of the boys just got through from Manila. Brought a little mail with 'em."

I thanked him and ripped the envelope open. Surely it can't be from home . . .

It isn't.

It's from a place that doesn't exist any more. . . . Fort Stotsenburg.

The writer points out that he is a close friend of my brother, who lives in Chicago. He suggests that we get together some evening soon at the Army and Navy Club for a bit of getting ac-

quainted. The letter has been lost for nearly a month. The name signed is L. L. Gray.

I wonder if he's still alive. . . .

## New Year's Day

The party that broke through from Manila last night with mail . . . Because they came, I begin this New Year with an auspiciousness never anticipated. I was standing before the Intelligence tent—which more and more resembled a conical pile of natural foliage owing to the effective camouflage the boys had worked over it—when Colonel George handed me a limp, dirty, red-bordered envelope.

"Came from Manila with that party last night," he explained. "We just got it sorted this morning."

It was a cheering, radiant message from home, a radiogram that had been on its way for a while. It had come through Heaven only knew what to reach me. Had it cost \$100 a word, I still would have considered the rate reasonable beyond second thought as I read it there under the deep green canopy of the towering trees.

I was aware presently that the Colonel was waiting for me to finish. His kindly eyes smiled.

"Everything all right?" he asked.

I nodded, unable to speak. If only he'd received one too!

"Call everyone together here, will you, please?

I did so. We looked around the circle of faces. There was not one among us who did not show the effects of the past three weeks of nightmarish existence. There were hollows at the temples; eyes were sacked in dirty blue wrinkles; creases drew down pallid faces and disappeared in scrubby growth of beard. But there was an undimmed light in the eye and an unaffected firmness of the chin. Shoulders were back, and while the flabbiness of peacetime long since had left bodies contracted, still there were no indications of malnutrition or the drawn boniness of starvation that we were to know later. There were Mamerow, Porter, Whitfield, Lazarini, Petit, Loetzel, MacMurray, Gregg, Sprague, Schwartz, Smith,

Churchill, Ames, Johnson, Lunde, Mason, Thomas, and a host of others. All eyes were on this little Colonel to whom every man jack looked for leadership, guidance, direction—hope. But this New Year's Day was not to provide either him or us with any hope—just stark facts.

"You are men, not boys," began Colonel George, and with that preface we knew that grim words were to follow. They did. "I'll talk straight from the shoulder, because you are too intelligent to want me to do anything else.

"First, what haven't we got? We haven't got a lot of things, but the most serious is this: apparently we haven't got enough aviation gasoline to run our little Air Force for even a short time. There is no aviation fuel to amount to anything on Bataan. Why there isn't, I have no idea. Somebody slipped. But why think about the other fellows' shortcomings, when in one way or another we have all slipped plenty? It simply means that until we can get gasoline we will have to limit our air activities to the absolute essentials, which for at least the time being must be principally reconnaissance. To properly direct a battle from Corregidor, they must have information, and we are going to give it to them just as long as we have a ship that will turn a prop and get off the ground.

"What else haven't we got? Well, maybe we shouldn't worry about aviation gasoline when we haven't got airplanes—I mean enough airplanes to justify this large ground organization.

"Now let's forget what we lack and talk about what we have.

"First we have enough food to last indefinitely."

The Colonel's glance swept the circle of lean faces before him. He noted the exchange of meaningful looks and the smiles beneath the scraggly beards. This specter of food shortage had haunted us from the first moments on the peninsula. But the Colonel's next words brought it back to us.

"But that does not mean that we can waste food," he said in slow measured terms. "We have been on a two-meal-a-day basis, but in point of rations you have had the equivalent of three in those two. We don't know how long we will be here before the Navy breaks through from Hawaii or help comes up from Australia. It's

sensible to assume that it will be a long time. Accordingly, we shall go on half-rations officially as from today."

He stopped to let his words sink deeply into our minds.

"We have plenty of rifles here on Bataan and a fair quantity of ammunition for them. We have pistols, we have jungle knives, we have digging equipment. To old-timers that suggests something more like an infantry pack than an Air Corps layout. . . . And that brings me to my next point.

"Since we lack airplanes, and since we are faced with the plain necessity for defending ourselves, it seems to me only a common-sense business that we should train ourselves as infantry. There isn't a man here but will feel better for knowing how to take advantage of cover, to dig in, to establish strong points, and to defend them. We will learn that our best friends are our rifles. In a few days we will have issued enough to supply every man. We will reorganize area defense.

"Today we will move to a new camp site farther up the hill. You know what the first task is—dig your slit trenches to protect your lives, then dig your latrines to protect your health. . . . Let's go."

We'd looked to him for leadership, we'd received it. A rapid-fire murmur of approval ran the circumference of the circle and terminated in action.

The Colonel motioned for me to follow. We went to his tent. Inside, Captain Sprague was stuffing his musette bag. He held out his hand; his eyes were grave, and his jaws were set.

"Goodbye," he said quietly. "I am going to Australia. If you want me to take some word for home down with me for mailing in Australia, I will be glad to wait."

"Bud!" I exclaimed. "You mean—"

"Yes," cut in Colonel George. "Bud and Buzz Wagner, Roland, Hennon, Kiser, Shepherd, and Irwin form a group that will be leaving with MacFarlane today for Mindanao. Then they will go on to Australia and fly P-40's back up here for us. Jack Dale, Connally, Blanton, Gilmore, Kinzel, New, and Gies left last night."

"Great stuff, Bud!" I exclaimed. "So we shall realize on our old fighter ferry route after all."

Hastily I wrote a brief letter destined for home. Possibly the Colonel's pep talk and the announcement that we should be receiving help from the south influenced me, but at any rate I am sure that I included more of optimism therein than the facts justified and certainly more than the future was to sustain. A few minutes later I again clasped his hand. The friendship that had begun that withering morning back in old Fort Santiago found a culmination in that wordless handclasp. Then he shook hands with Hal Eads and lastly with the Colonel. For this brief moment, then, "The Four Untwitchables" were reunited in parting—never again to be rejoined. Silently we stood outside the tent and watched him as he strode up the jungle path, the filtered sunlight playing a moving pattern on his receding figure.

He never looked back.

The Colonel broke the silence. "We've got work to do."

And we had. For that day witnessed the establishment of our main camp above the Engineer settlement. We called it Little Baguio although strictly speaking this name had previously been accorded to the general area of the Engineer camp.

Colonel George and Captain Eads had reconnoitered this section many times. The directions were simple: first in point of ascent along the spine of the ridge would come the motor park; secondly, the kitchen area; thirdly, the 5th Interceptor Command area; fourthly, the armament and general company area; above that, the air warning unit; and surrounding it, but principally on the east, the Officers' shelter area. Higher on the ridge yet was the ever busy Philippine Army Signal Corps station, which hardly pitched its tent before the thin whistles of invisible communications were reaching out to the still friendly Philippine Islands to the south.

### We, the Worms

"It's going to be different," said Colonel George. "When they come today, we're going to try to mess them up." He turned to

me. "I'd like all the data the S-2 Section has been able to gather concerning the habits of the bombers that have been hitting Corregidor. We'll base plans on that."

We did have some data. Those hateful flights of bi-engined bombers showed definite habit traits. They came at almost identical times each succeeding day. They followed a fixed path down the peninsula and usually observed a set approach line to the bomb-release point.

It looked good. Orders went out. We had a total of eighteen fighter planes from our fields in the northern part of the peninsula. After they'd tried to intercept today's flight of bombers, one squadron of nine fighters would take off for Mindanao. It was too risky having all our few precious birds on this tiny belt of land; some should be based elsewhere to provide tactical possibilities and protection to the machines themselves.

All seemed in readiness.

But Dame Fortune still hid her face from us. The sky was not clear. There were endless possibilities for an indecisive game of cloud hide-and-seek. Then, too, maybe the enemy guessed our intentions; at any rate, although he came in at the usual time, he somewhat altered his line of approach. What was more important, he came in so high as to make the sound of his motors faint and uncertain.

Suddenly, for the first time in an age, we heard a different sound. Motors, too, but strong, steady and high-pitched. P-40's. Like the angry sizzling hum of bees bulleting through the air to the attack.

A wild cheer arose raggedly from the depths of the forest. Our own P-40's. The first friendly planes we'd seen in days and days of deadly bombing from the sky.

Through our bodies went a tremendous surge of emotion. A leaping desire to smash bare-fisted into the enemy. A swelling intoxication of patriotism. . . .

Up and up they droned. Higher and higher.

We lost them in the clouds. Against the background of a strange silence came the droning of the contentious motors high above—

the broken, unrhythymical beat of the Japanese radials and the hornet whine of the American in-line Allisons. The antiaircraft guns were silent by order. This was to be an air fight.

Faintly above the thin sounds of the engines came a different sound—the faint flat clatter of machine guns and cannon.

We waited with pent breath.

The sounds ceased. The whine and drone grew faint—returned—grew faint again. Then the old familiar drum roll of bombs on Corregidor.

We stared at one another, the stimulation draining out of us and leaving us weak.

What did it mean? Had they shot our 40's down?

Still, as we listened, we knew that this raid had nothing of the proportions of its predecessors. Yesterday eighteen bombers had enjoyed another field day over Corregidor and done much more surface damage, although inflicting few casualties.

But today, January 4, there was only that single drum roll.

In an agony of uncertainty we waited. Then the field telephones began to jangle, all at once. And over them we learned all over again the bitter, bitter truth that our own wishful thinking and stupid self-administered propaganda had blinded us to before the war.

"Simply couldn't catch them," came the voice of one of the pilots. "I had the old throttle right up against the bulkhead, but they held such a pace that I never got within shooting distance before I had to come back."

Bombers that could pace fighters! True, our 40's had been through hell and high water since December 8. They were not peak-efficiency machines any more, or anything like it. But they were far from being cripples, too. Yes, the Japanese medium bombers could pace our fighters. What then, one was forced to wonder, could their best fighters do? . . .

Something was all wrong.

We didn't get a single bomber today. We did break up their formation, and no doubt it was an unpleasant surprise for them to learn that so many of our fighters were still air-borne, when they had assumed they'd cleaned us up except for one or two, days ago.

The phone was ringing again.

It was to report that the one flight had refueled and taken off for the south. The leader never had received an order countermanding that original operation order for the flight south.

Our cup of bitterness was not yet full.

Presently one P-40 returned from this flight, unable to fly far because of the acute need for complete overhaul.

Of the eight that continued toward Mindanao, six arrived. Two had dropped into oblivion somewhere en route.

We had learned two things definitely: To intercept these bombers would require much more time for a high-altitude climb in our P-40's, which definitely were medium altitude airplanes. And we should have to drop down on the bombers in order to gain the necessary speed to catch them.

We had failed to prevent a bombing.

We had lost two of our precious remaining aircraft forever.

The Rock has predicted that we may expect outpost action any day now. The enemy patrols have been spotted in the area of our original Bataan line. This extended from Guagua on the east, upward and westward to Porac, and then down in a sweeping arc over high mountains toward the southwest to Olongapo on Subic Bay.

We have established a first line now directly across the peninsula from Abacay on the east, across high bulging Mt. Natib in the center, to Moron on the west. Flitting enemy patrols have been seen as far south as Dinalupihan.

A knot of silent, grim-faced men stand in the dust of the road in the Command area. They are reading the hour bulletins announcing the Rock's predictions.

The defenders of Bataan, brown and white alike, can expect a major attack by no fewer than three reinforced divisions of picked Japanese troops by the 11th of this month, the bulletins state coldly.

They're smacking Corregidor again—a lot of them, flying so high we can barely hear them. No use sending 40's up there:

they're not even designed to fight in that substratosphere altitude. Maybe our raid against them is responsible to some degree for that extremely high flying. Their bombing is not so accurate, anyway. They've hit the bay more than either Mariveles or the Rock. Good. It gives us a lot of dead fish. And the kitchens can use them. (The rations are noticeably lighter now. No more luscious ham and canned fruit.)

But that's not the only reason they're flying high. At least one battery on the Rock has been picking them off at a rate that must be punching holes in their "aircraft available" board. Three the other day. And yesterday they smashed no fewer than seven out of the sky. They've got it down pat. The approach line is perfectly plotted. So is the retiring line. Although it means that they take a spanking first, the gunners let them come over and release their eggs. This gives the gunners the route and altitude readings. Then when they wheel for the retirement, the guns begin picking them off like hunters winging scared ducks.

The Japanese have spotted all our fields now.

It is almost impossible to operate reconnaissance aircraft to provide Corregidor with information regarding the state of the enemy's advance down the heart of Luzon, and the degree to which he is being reinforced from the original point of fatal entry—Lingayen Gulf. Type 97 dive bombers in relays are patrolling over our fields. If a ship is lucky enough to get off, he is almost sure to be bombed or strafed or both as he comes in for refueling or shelter.

But the Nipponeese don't get off with whole skins every time; these pestiferous 97's with their rigid landing gear showing beneath them like the splayed claws of a vulture. No fewer than three of them today plummeted blazing to the earth as the result of deadly shooting by P-40 pilots. Another lost some feathers and limped away.

But it cost us another one of our 40's.

How many days left if we'd lose one a day?

The Colonel is back.

Twice already he has had to remind Infantry commanders hereabouts that he is the official chief of the Fifth Interceptor Command and as such will decline to recognize orders affecting Air Corps personnel unless they emanate from Corregidor and direct him as commander to issue orders in turn.

Not that he is in any way averse to throwing weight where it will be the most felt by the enemy. There is no doubt that the choicest reservoir of able-bodied white troops on the Peninsula is constituted in this same Fifth Interceptor Command; but he is utterly determined to prevent a disintegration of this force—indiscriminate assignment of units to other commands, with the resulting loss of control over them, soon would reduce him to the position of being completely unable to operate air reinforcements if they arrive. (He refuses to use the word "if," too; he says "when they arrive"!)

His stout attitude is sustained by the Chief of Staff, General Sutherland. Air Corps personnel will be used as line Infantry and as organized reserves. But men going into Infantry outfits will not become Infantry as such; they will be Air Corps troops on loan as doughboys to Infantry commanders, who must relinquish them for service in their original capacities when Colonel George can show that the time for reactivation of the Air Corps is at hand.

As it is shaping up now, orders soon will be issued reconstituting the 24th Pursuit Group as the 2nd Infantry Regiment (Provisional), which in turn is to be a part of General Selick's command, or putting it differently, a part of the 71st Division. (Later, General C. A. Pearce was to assume command of this organization.)

The last strength returns—hustled down the burdened road paralleling Manila Bay, Mariveles, and up the west coast by hammering motor-cycle messengers, who having assumed so much of the peninsula's finely powdered reddish real estate upon their persons are perfect examples of what the well camouflaged soldier wears in this man's war—show the composition of the 24th to be about as follows:

### Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron

		8 officers, 182 enlisted men
3rd Pursuit Squadron	20	105
17th Pursuit Squadron	11	161
20th Pursuit Squadron	23	142
21st Pursuit Squadron	8	210
34th Pursuit Squadron	14	220

Our own outfit at Little Baguio—that is, the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the Fifth Interceptor Command, comprising the original personnel of this unit together with the elements of the Far Eastern Air Force Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron—was reorganized and reduced in such a way as to provide rifle outfits, which were to be designated as the 1st Far Eastern Air Force Combat Team.

In a quiet moment I ask the Colonel what he learned on Corregidor regarding aid possibilities.

"It's coming," he says quietly. But he evaded my searching look.

"Yes, I know," I persisted, but with that old familiar feeling of emptiness. I know that once more he simply is clinging to that steel-core faith of his. He is speaking again.

"They're diverting some good Air Corps generals to Australia to get things organized for us down there."

"Airplanes?"

"The A-24's are down there. It won't be long now, boy," he says with that ring of enthusiasm which defies a denial that it was genuine.

I turned away.

What we want is airplanes! We want food! We want something besides 1903 model Springfields to face seasoned troops with everything they need to cut us down. We want grenades, Tommy guns, mortars . . .

I walk away from the tent before the Colonel can read the black thoughts on my face.

Then I come back. After all, I do have some good news, and by

Heaven, if there are any really bright spots in this picture that I can supply Colonel George, I'm going to do it!

"Bud's in and out of Mindanao," I tell him, and his face lights up.

"Good old Bud. He'll bring us airplanes—or else!"

It is no presentiment (that "or else"), I'm sure.

It is a year ago today that I reported to General Claggett at Selfridge Field. It is but one month ago tonight that the first bombs crashed down upon Nichols Field from terrifying night-flying death. Somehow, all perspectives are disjointed. Neither event has an actual time-sequence relationship; neither seems real. Yet with each recollection of the latter, there now is a growing accompaniment of horror, like some dark shapeless, creeping thing.

Tonight through the jungle curtain above and around us, which permits the infiltration of no relieving starlight whatever, there is an uneasiness, a quivering tension. It is the guns to the north. Clearer tonight. More detailed. The restless snoring of a ravening giant. Blind. Yet fatefully purposeful. Nearer. Always nearer.

At dawn I heard the Colonel astir. Saw him lift my camp mirror from its peg. To my dozing consciousness came the odor of sweet wood smoke. Then an unfamiliar scraping noise, slight, yet penetrating in its quality. As I blinked my eyes open, the Colonel was softly singing a ditty in time to the scraping. The tune was "The Last Time I Saw Paris." The parody was "The Last Time I Saw Whiskers."

I sat bolt upright, howling to Lefty to come to my aid to prevent this desecration. But we were too late. The rich, glossy beard which had so effectively graced our chief's face was but a memory.

"But why?" we demanded in chorus, staring at his newly revealed countenance, at once strange to us and more youthful, but lacking that—that Bataan something!

His only answer was a grin.

"Then, sir," I said sternly. "You'll grow it back. That's an order!"

"If you need any help enforcing it, let me know," growled Lefty fiercely. "He's getting out of hand, isn't he?"

"So, they say it can't be done?"

The Colonel's black eyes fixed Lefty with an unwavering look that was at once smoldering and cold. Lefty stood to his thankless guns under that thoroughly disconcerting search.

"Yes, sir," he said quietly, tapping a cigarette and snapping flame to it with his lighter. "They seem to feel that we are being unreasonable in thinking of such a thing, considering the sum total of heavy machinery available for construction purposes."

"That seems to have a highly familiar ring," snapped the Colonel.

"Colonel, you know how completely sold *I* am on this thing," said Lefty earnestly. "But it's going to take more weight and rank than I've got to make it come true."

For a long minute Colonel George was silent. Then he strode to the field telephone and asked the "Palace" operator to put him in touch with General Casey.

"I know where I can get the weight, the rank—and the imagination!" he snapped. "If I'm wrong, General Casey will tell me so. And if I'm right, he'll back me to the hilt with General Sutherland."

He was right. And while lesser men once more placed themselves in an obstructive position, Colonel George put his propositions firmly, logically, clearly before those who possessed both the imagination to see and the courage to do big things right.

During reconnaissance with Lefty he had decided upon the proper location for his subterranean stronghold. It was in a saucer-shaped depression just west of Mariveles. The central portion of the saucer would scoop into a perfect landing field that would slope gently until its feet slipped under the calm waters of Mariveles Bay. Thus it would serve both land planes and amphibious craft landing on the bay. To the south a high ridge formed a natural tunneling face. The sharp rises to the north provided an opposite face. In these rugged hills he proposed to drive a series of tunnels, some of which would be joined to provide hangars, repair bays, and quarters. Others would be fuel and ammunition dumps safe from the heaviest bomb hits. In the meantime, he proposed to dicker with the Navy for the occupancy of their partly driven tunnels to the east of Mariveles barrio.

The Navy had cooperated and had commenced evacuation plans. In the meantime, work of mining went on apace. Lefty had scoured the country for miners, finding a few each day among the refugees that poured onto the Peninsula in ever greater numbers (adding hourly to our already pressing food supply problems).

That talk on the field telephone, plus some hardheaded conferences of the type these three men specialized in, had a healthy whip-cracking effect in quarters where it was most sorely needed. All available heavy equipment was diverted from everything except vital road maintenance and a few other necessary jobs.

And once more we were engaged upon the kind of defense and protective construction that should have been planned, executed, and completed months before in the piping days of peace.

#### Fireworks. . . .

Last night one of our P-40's roared out over Bataan Field runway and, circling low over the coast, took off on a moonlight reconnaissance. The orders had been issued verbally by Colonel George. Only the small, chosen knot of personnel concerned knew of the mission, yet hardly had preparations been completed for wheeling the fighter from its concealed revetments up the jungle trail when a red rocket hissed into the air from the Manila Bay end of the runway.

The sentry on duty on the Bataan Road crossing rapidly emptied his rifle magazine in the direction his startled eyes told him was the point of origin. Since he was armed with a Garand this meant fast lead in a short time; and, following the bullets, he raced down to the water's edge. Two other heavily armed sentries combed the area, but, as usual, there was no trace.

The second rocket was a yellow one fired from somewhere in the middle of the almost uninhabited village of Cabcaben. And again, no trace. It arched over the village and fell hissing into the bay.

"I feel that it's a great reflection on our entire organization, the constabulary, and everyone else that we have been unable to hit this thing effectively," I said, as I paced up and down the path in front of the Intelligence tent.

Lieutenant Edwards, Sergeant Roulston, and Corporal Corey were in the tent. They stared hard at the ground. We had been over this so many times.

"I agree with you," nodded Edwards, his usual smiling face grim, "but it's useless to attempt to patrol all areas fully."

"That's an impossibility," offered Roulston. "What we have got to do is invent a way of beating them at their own game."

Lieutenant Edwards and I glanced quickly at each other: I knew what was in his mind; he knew what was in mine. Then we smiled. Did Roulston also entertain the same idea?

Suddenly the three of us were talking at once. When this verbal jam cleared away slightly, it was obvious that we all had vaguely similar thoughts. Frankly, I do not know who should be credited. But the main thing is that this day had witnessed the birth of an idea which was designed to steal the fire from the fireworks the Japanese were using with such grim effect against us.

It was the height of simplicity really. But simple as it was, it had not occurred to us previously. And, like most simple devices, its very strength was derived from the fact that it required no complexity of thought or performance for its realization.

It was simply this: why not fire rockets ourselves?

As we discussed it our excitement rose with each moment. After all, attack the proposition from any angle and it still simply laughed to you in sheer simplicity. In the first place, the Japanese agent would never know whether the rocket he had just seen was one of his own or one of ours, and therefore his indecision as to the action to be taken in response to the signal would leave him in the middle. Japanese airplanes no longer could rely upon rockets for information as to bombing points or the take-off or landing of American airplanes. This alone would be worth the price of any effort we might make.

But a factor of the greatest importance, to which we had not given sufficient weight was morale. Certainly the appearance of Japanese rockets in our midst was destructive of morale. That trail of fire across the sky seared our very bones with the consciousness that we were surrounded with enemies. We could not trust our own buddies. Or so it seemed.

Now the thing would suddenly assume the proportions of a huge joke. Firing the rockets ourselves would rob them of the demoralization their appearance held for even the sturdiest of us. This, coupled with the discomfiture, dismay, and confusion we would cause the enemy by utilizing his own instruments against him would establish the whole business on the plane of a vigorous joke.

By arrangement with the military patrols at Bataan Field and on the coast near Cabcaben, we fired rockets on numerous occasions, both when aircraft were to take off and when they were not. It was delightful to note the alacrity of Japanese pilots in responding—with the discovery that the rockets might actually be leading them over a machine-gun nest instead of to some helpless American aircraft or ground unit. Our own people vied with one another for the privilege of firing the rockets, despite the fact that it was a most dangerous business, inasmuch as there were general orders to shoot to kill anyone firing rockets in those nervous days and nights.

Within a week we had seriously impeded the enemy in his up-to-then most efficient instrument for terrorizing and giving information to his cohorts on land, on the sea, and in the air.

Within a few weeks, enemy rockets seldom were reported.

It was just too simple.

But it worked.

*Little Baguio, January 14th*

The silence of our woods was undisturbed by heavy bombs for more than a week. Even dive-bomber formations were so lacking as to lead us to believe that the Chinese pushes at Changsha and the rest of that twelve-hundred-mile line, plus the expenditures at sorely pressed Malaya, plus the new commitments in Davao, the Celebes, and at Tarakan had drained the enemy air supply and therefore we could expect immunity for a time. I think that was logic of an acceptable order. But the return today of two waves at the right time shows us that they still have a few lefts and rights to spare for us. Haven't had a report of damage yet from Corregidor. They used some 500's, of that I'm positive: the earth registered the shock clear over here.

Yesterday Colonel George announced a change in the direction of air belligerency. He outlined his intent to establish an advanced command post midway between Bataan Field and the field now building at Cabcaben. Here he will assemble ten or so of his best pilots, his best maintenance men, armorers, etc., together with a small, hand-picked staff. He will take personal command, and we will see if we cannot bring high-speed annoyance into the consciousness of our tormenters, whose contempt of our ground effort is registered by a continuous patrol of observation doing lazy eights above the front line and correcting in detail such errors as his counter-battery artillery might be making. His untroubled presence above is as destructive to our people's morale as it is to our sorely needed 75's, a number of which have suffered direct hits from 105's receiving the corrective figures.

Laudable as the Colonel's plan is, it nevertheless becomes increasingly difficult to conceive of its transmutation into the stern metal of action. We have eight tired P-40's. (And never were birds more eagerly and endlessly hunted than this octet.) We have exactly fifteen known gallons of prestone (although there are tales of secret

caches by farseeing if selfish squadrons). It is recalled that back in the halcyon days when the 40's were new, we could not take them off the ground because way back in the dim vagueness of official supply coordination, the cooling liquid never was sent along with the airplanes in the first place. The only explanation (unofficial!) is that there was no sense in sending antifreezing liquid to such a hot country as the Philippines, anyway!

And there may be more than a modicum of reasoning in this. History only will tell the final tale of this battle of the liquid- and air-cooled engines. To develop one type alone may ensure failure to discover latent possibilities in the other because of discontinued research. The Army Air Corps has constantly refused to accept one type for this very reason. Still, right now, we are in the unhappy position of wishing fervently that liquid-cooled engines with their attendant requirement of special coolants were in some far-off country, and that we owned excellent air-cooled units. At least we should not have to cease operations because we'd run out of a cooling element hard to obtain, difficult to transport, hard to use, harder to keep and, after all, a poor second to the great and endless supercooled atmosphere in which the great percentage of airplane operations take place.

We do have ample aircraft ammunition.

We have at this time something over 100,000 gallons of aviation gasoline. Seems like much. But that would just fill up a good flight of B-17's for one return trip.

It is only too apparent that the enemy is going to seize Borneo. His primary object is to get oil.

But seizing it will serve him in another direction, of which he no doubt is perfectly aware: it will cut our one remaining line of supply and relief. Tarakan, Borneo, is under siege and cannot long remain in Dutch hands. Even now it is of no use to us. Thus, in one blow the enemy cuts the fragile umbilical cord through which we hoped (on what basis it would be difficult to reasonably conceive) to nourish our rapidly fading infant Air Force.

Of course, the 17's could be ferried directly; but they are of precious little use. The Japanese accomplish more with one flight of their mediums than we have done with our entire flight of

heavy bombers. It must be our fault. The British apparently can use them. Experience—that's the answer: the one and only factor you cannot supply ready-made to any military force on the face of this rapidly retrogressing world. We knew the answers; they were plain for us to read, to see.

But we heeded them not.

### *Thursday January 15th*

Half the month gone!

Colonel George ordered south today on first available transport. I am not disturbed. He'll persuade them out of that. He and Lefty are going up to Bataan Field today to locate the advance post he spoke of.

I'll be alone tonight.

### *Friday January 16th*

A noisy night. The artillery bumped and thudded and belched. Despite my most reasoned determination, my mind insisted on trying to analyze the different calibers and discern the shell explosions. The jungle was intensely dark, but I fell asleep finally by riveting my eyes upon a glowing spot of light beside my bed. It was a dead lightning bug.

Another break-through this afternoon. The 31st Infantry has been rushed in to hold.

We hear that the Japanese have taken Tarakan. Now they're hitting Balik Papan. Dare we cherish the hope that the Dutch succeeded in destroying their oil stocks and refineries?

### *Saturday January 17th*

Horace Greely and I went to the Second Corps front area today to collect first-hand information about Japanese dive bombers. One

was said to have been shot down almost intact. (We got two or three today.) Our progress was a business of dodging a constant patrol of three more dive bombers—Japanese 97's—and staying out of the way of Infantry patrols. War and peace. In curious juxtaposition: Filipinos in native costume—men, women, and children—harvesting rice in one field; in the next, an antiaircraft battery streaking red hate into the heavens; and on the other side a camouflaged field battery cracked viciously whenever the patrolling 97's were considered to be in a position from which they could not observe the flash. I was amazed at the number of natives still inhabiting these dangerous areas. Thousands have gone into the hills, and the barrios are boarded up and deserted. At one point, a whole line of wrecked carromatas in dismal confusion where bombs or shells had caught them and hurled them from the highway.

If this enemy dive bomber was "relatively intact," then what must the others have looked like? In a swamp, to the north of which we could hear machine guns chattering, only a few ripped aluminum fragments still were visible above the brackish slime. Destitute Filipinos had buried the pilot in a crude grave. He was only a young fellow, they said. Only a little fellow. And one of his feet was torn off. Shrill-voiced children began throwing rocks at the grave. These people have suffered much from the invader. Still, the older ones ordered the children to stop.

As we ran southward again, we were forced to sudden cover by eleven dive bombers. A solid pillar of gray smoke and dust hung over Bataan Field. Their visiting card.

*Sunday January 18th*

Dressed, I went at once to the Intelligence tent to check the morning Intelligence Reports from the front lines.

"No, nothing so far to disturb peace of mind," grinned Lieutenant Edwards. "Few of them tried to get round back but failed. First and Second Corps report an unusually quiet night, as a matter of fact."

"Too quiet," I growled, apparently determined to bring my ap-

prehensions to reality, and to vent my sour temper on someone—did, in fact, on Lieutenant Edwards.

But his disposition that morning was as radiant as his whiskers. I went to breakfast. Halfway back along the deep ravine trail, I met one of the sergeants from the Operations tent.

"Looked like some hot stuff coming in, sir, when I left."

A quick shiver traversed me. Instantly I knew this was it.

"What do you mean?" I asked quickly.

"Ships coming into Subic," he said. "First Corps all excited about it."

I hurried up the gulch and up the trail to Operations. Both Edwards and Captain Lunde were intent on notes Lunde was making as he hung the field telephone transmitter on its pegs.

"Ha!" I heard Lieutenant Edwards grunt. "Malaya stuff, eh?"

He looked up as he heard my footsteps. He grinned again, but this time it was a little strained.

"Apparently my sunny prediction of a nice day was a little premature," he said, showing me notes that he had just received from our left front. "We cannot be sure what it is all about; but it would seem that there are some large ships—probably transports—in Subic Bay, and there are some of the same kind of vessels clear down south. They are just abreast of our Main Line of Resistance now. May be trying to outflank us along our own west coast."

"What does Signal Hill say?" I questioned.

"We are trying to get them now."

At that moment the bells jangled, and I answered. It was Signal Hill.

"Cannot make it out," came the voice. "There is something up the coast, but for some reason it is very indistinct. Probably morning haze. At any rate, we cannot be sure whether there is a considerable number of flat bargelike craft very close in, or some bigger stuff further away."

"O.K. Keep it hot," I instructed. And then to Lieutenant Edwards: "What does First Corps say?"

"Nothing more than this. They are quite worried, and the last word was that General Wainwright himself was going to take a patrol and have a look-see."

I took the phone again. "Give me Palace Advance, urgent."

The line cracked and popped as though jungle monkeys were throwing coconuts at it the full length between Little Baguio and Colonel George's Advance Command Post near Bataan Field, but there was no answer. Again and again the operator forced his ringing current along the line. Then he confessed failure. The line was out. . . . And I had one more contribution to my unexplained jitters of the early morning. Another inevitable accompaniment of enemy action—the sinister failure of communications at the critical time. Bataan Field was isolated.

Immediately I called the big 297 set. There it was again. Sabotage easily could account for the disruption of land lines, but what fiendish combination of ill luck would also account for radio breakdown at such a time? No, sabotage was not responsible for the radio. But something was. Anyway, it was out. We could not call up reconnaissance or inform Colonel George. We did inform Corregidor. But they already had had the disturbing information from a jittery left-front observation post. A few minutes later a courier was dispatched for Bataan Field.

Throughout the morning, reports crowded upon one another's heels, each one seemingly more grotesque or contradictory than the one before it. The vessels, whatever they really were, expanded from two ships to twenty-two, at one time including three aircraft carriers—only to dissolve into the mists that proved so tricky; and our total dropped again to less than half a dozen of—something! It was pretty plain that the mysterious craft off our MLR were not large vessels or aircraft carriers with flat decks. They must be barges or some other type of smaller vessel without superstructure.

At 2:20 Lieutenant Garrity called from General Wainwright's First Corps. His information was based on the results of the reconnaissance. There were: four ships in Binango Cove below Subic; looked as though one at least was a cruiser; not quite sure about the patches immediately off our left MLR.

At 6:45 P.M. a reconnaissance established the fact that one cruiser and two smaller ships were in Subic.

"Well, if that is all, maybe it's not so bad after all," Lieutenant Edwards commented.

Somehow, actually establishing the fact of the presence of these ships and something of their nature seemed to relieve my earlier uneasiness. By evening I felt almost optimistic. Silly paradox, I admitted; but feelings are feelings, and that was the way I felt. Still, I had to admit that I frequently had put a lighter complexion on things after they actually had grown serious, simply because in the position in which we found ourselves we could not indulge in apprehension. We lived on the edge of a volcano and had grown accustomed to it. The fact that we detected signs of an impending eruption called for immediate denial psychologically. Anything else meant panic; and panic we could not entertain.

Three times I checked with the Airfield, with the Corps fronts and with Signal Hill. All seemed quiet enough. Tomorrow might be a different story. I would get some rest in anticipation.

But that rest was short-lived.

For that night it came: the most serious threat to our military integrity we had experienced since establishing the present lines of resistance.

Under the cover of night they came upon our west coast. Barge-loads of them from the northwest.

But on the front, General Wainwright had anticipated wisely. Farther down, Infantry and Air Corps beach defense units, tense after the day of rumor and counter-rumor, were completely on the *qui vive*. The Navy offshore patrol slipped through the night on a ferret mission. Hardly had the first barge begun to move down the coast and inward before lightning struck from two directions—the sea and the land.

The lightning split into individual forks and flashes.

The sea rippled with a lace of fire, and all above the west coast the blackout line of the land broke into brilliant spots of instantaneous light. Came one huge explosion just off the shore. And soon another.

Overhead P-40's roared into the light and their thirty-pound demolition bombs made swift necklaces of light across the churning water. Out to sea they whipped, and then swooped on invisible

wings for the return, their guns spitting savagely into the struggling loads below. With ammunition exhausted, they zoomed across the spine of the peninsula and down onto Bataan Field for a new load of winged death, and then out again.

The air bumped and hammered to the explosion of heavy guns from General Wainwright's left, and they made continuous their throaty contribution to the great orchestra of war on this Sabbath night. French 75's concealed on the jungle coast line for just such an emergency as this, fired with flat trajectory into the dark masses discernible in the brilliant flashes off the coast. Quick, muffled mighty explosions . . . And the masses dissolved into bobbing fragments of men and material. The crazy chattering of machine guns was incessant, and the water was whipped into a frenzy by the lashing steel-jacketed bullets.

Still they came. As rapidly as one barge reached the rock-strewn beach, its human load spewed out and quickly disappeared behind sizable boulders. Then, bit by bit, the figures jerked themselves towards the further protection of the trees where the jungle dipped sharply down to the sea. As they did, new names were struck in the bloody history of Bataan: Saysain, Kaybobo Point, Aglaloma Bay, Longaskawayan, Los Cochinos. Some of the barges drifted to the south and were lost from sight. The fight was too hot to note their exact course and position or their numbers.

We were to learn later that those southward-drifting barge-loads had accomplished their landing not only behind our Main Line of Resistance, but far to the rear of our Reserve line. But why speak of lines?

They were back of our rear installations!

The enemy actually was between us and Corregidor!

*Monday January 19th*

Called to Advanced Command Post today. Colonel George and Lefty are established there for keeps. Out in a clearing away from the jungle, the Colonel is having constructed a little bamboo shack with a lean-to.

"That's going to be our future home and headquarters," explained the Colonel, as an ancient Filipino, really the "king" of this section, but christened "Pop" by Colonel George, directed his numerous sons and relatives in establishing the foundation and frame.

"Out there in the clearing, sir—where you'll be visible for twenty miles?" I asked in consternation.

The Colonel gave me a toothy grin. "Exactly," he chuckled. "Who'd think that any commander would be so foolish as to establish his headquarters in a clearing where he *could* be observed for twenty miles by every bomber and fighter in the air? The Nips will think it is a native shack, and they'll leave it alone. . . . When are you coming up to move in?"

"I—I—" I stammered.

"Well, you are, aren't you? This is where all the fun's going to be. . . . And we will need you."

I was consistent, anyway. Every quarters move Colonel George has ever suggested, I found reason for not wishing to cooperate. And I feel the same about this one. I have become deeply attached to the chapellike peace, quiet, and solitude of our quarters on the jungle-crowded ridge at Little Baguio.

However, my visit to Advanced Command Post was not to explore home sites. In reality, the Colonel's smiles and chuckles were entirely forced. I knew that later when I saw him alone in the jungle staring unmovingly at his feet. For one of our truly fine young pilots who, like me, saw sunset merge into dusk last evening, tonight lies smashed by Japanese bullets and cannon shell. A philosophic, serious lad of twenty-four was Lieutenant Marshall Anderson of the 20th Pursuit Squadron. He has been one of our outstanding pilots. But the Japanese had marked him. The odds were five and six to one against him and the others who were over the First Corps front this morning. A whole flight of enemy planes roared down upon him. Two of them fell to blazing machine guns. But his own 40 was riddled. He bailed out. But enemy pilots, forsaking every rule of sportsmanship in the air—yes, there is such a thing in this vicious insane business of war—attacked his descending body in repeated swoops. Their bullets must have killed him in

mid-air. Our people took his body to Mariveles and buried him in the military cemetery there.

We have seven P-40's now. Four can fly.

The Japs are in Subic Bay again.

*Tuesday January 20th*

And so, two-thirds of the month is gone; a month that in December seemed much too insecure to be included in our reckonings.

One indulges in such foolish things as "marking the calendar." This harmless device to pass the time consists merely in canvassing the men in your own small group as to their guess—guess, indeed! —their absolute prophecy as to the date of our reentry into Manila. Mine, I might add, is July 4th.

Even July 4th is wholly unreal, though. Reality points to something rather more pertinent. Take General MacArthur's proclamation of 15th January, for instance (it is an almost verbatim reproduction of a message from President Roosevelt), to all unit commanders, who are charged to see that it comes to the attention of every soldier in each outfit. Like this, it goes:

"Help is on the way from the United States. Thousands of troops and hundreds of planes are being dispatched. The exact time of arrival of reinforcements is unknown, as they will have to fight their way through Japanese attempts against them. It is imperative that our troops hold until these reinforcements arrive.

"No further retreat is possible. We have more troops in Bataan than the Japanese have thrown against us; our supplies are ample; a determined defense will defeat the enemy's attack.

"It is a question now of courage and determination. Men who run will merely be destroyed, but men who fight will save themselves and their country.

"I call upon every soldier in Bataan to fight in his assigned position, resisting every attack. This is the only road to salvation. If we fight we will win; if we retreat we will be destroyed."

I heard 40 motors just then. It's about eight-thirty, and very

dark. They seem to be settling around Bataan Field. We're expecting what remains of that squadron that went to Mindanao a couple of weeks ago. There goes the phone now.

It was Ossie. Woolery, Hall, and one other are back. The fourth conked out somewhere over Panay. Pilot parachuted. Don't know who, yet.

Another 40 gone.

### Thursday January 22nd

Month since I've had a haircut.

They hit us right through the center of the Main Line of Resistance last night. We drew a new MLR on the maps this morning still farther south. No one said much. We really don't have a "front" at all—not as they had it in World War I. This is what we call a fluid front. Trouble is, it seems to flow only one way: back!

### Friday January 23rd

Was called to Advanced Command Post today. And was I glad I went! They had real *roast beef*. No one asked where, or how come. We just ate fast, lest it should turn into "goldfish." I found the Colonel in the middle of the small stream at the bottom of the steep gully where he has hidden the kitchen and mess section. He was in muddy water up to his knees, uniform and all, helping the boys to establish a dam so that they could store up enough water to have shower baths further down. There's only one way to teach, and that's to *do*, he declared. That's something of a twist, isn't it? I always heard it on the campus: "Those who can, do—and those who can't, teach!"

The new reserve line is to be established almost this far south, the Colonel explained. The new MLR is back where our former reserve line was.

I asked him if he was worried.

He just grinned and asked me to bring up his other pistol!

*Saturday January 24th*

Interesting and not entirely prophetic proclamation, that of General MacArthur's. It was not entirely accurate. The "help is on the way" part of it is still all right. In no particular is the integrity of that statement threatened; it still is "on the way." We've not the slightest indication that it is any more than that. The philosophically inclined comment above is to the "no retreat" department. One month ago—as I write this in the afternoon—I was making up two piles of maps, documents, etc. One was to be stowed into the waiting truck outside Fort McKinley quarters No. 28, together with some of my faithful personnel (Roulston, Corey, Prescott) and transferred through what remained of the afternoon and the dark to come to the remote regions of Bataan Peninsula. The rest we would consign to the flames: scores of maps we had worked so hard to accumulate; hundreds of dollars' worth of supplies. We were retreating again. . . .

Last night, to the rumble of heavy artillery masking the movement, the first units of our front line began a cautious withdrawal. It will continue today and tomorrow and be completed by tomorrow night. The Reserve line now becomes the Main Line of Resistance. We are now crowded down into the last, southern third of the peninsula. And the general order says, "This line will be held at all costs," adding that there can be absolutely no further withdrawal.

No, I don't see how there can be, myself. The water of Mariveles Bay is down below us just a few kilometers.

The reason for this withdrawal is not entirely clear. Officially, it is due to enemy penetration down the most difficult part of the peninsula—the center—right over Mount Natib. Leave it to these little Nips to do it the hard way, but *do* it. There has been more or less constant infiltration. Snipers are busy deep back of our lines, and their excellent rifles with the best German telescopes added to their jungle training make them deadly in the extreme. On the other hand, we have reports that the enemy digs in quite far to his own rear. I suspect that General MacArthur has had word

of the coming of heavy Japanese reinforcements and proposes to tighten his family circle before we are cut up. I'm beginning to believe that he timed the retreat to Bataan nicely, missing it only by two days, possibly, before traffic would have made it a chaos which the enemy could not fail to note. (The enemy did commit a colossal blunder there. He could have bombed this army right out of existence during the retreat over one or two tremendously jammed roads. But he didn't!)

At any rate, the Japs have become so neighborly as to make those landings on the west coast of the peninsula as far south as we are. Again, the policy of employing the unexpected is utilized to the utmost. The landings would be most hazardous and fraught with the greatest difficulty there; rocks rise sheer from the sea and all of that. So, that's the location for the nighttime party. The show is not a success, however, on account of the Navy inshore patrol and our artillery. The patrol spots one of their landing barges and puts a torpedo into it. Alarmed, the inland artillery takes up and sinks another. Some of the Japanese succeed in making shore and endeavor to conceal themselves. There are shooting affairs here and there during the subsequent daylight hours. They have changed into Filipino dress, however, and in this disguise ambushed one Navy party, killing the officer.

Beside me the telephone rings jerkily. From down in the jungle, Lieutenant Edwards tells of wounded Japanese prisoners at Mariveles. They have been taken in the fighting at the landings.

"I will go down and interview them," I tell him. And fifteen minutes later the dust-laden LaSalle is hammering down the mountain zigzag.

The sun filters through the lofty foliage reaching high above the serpentine road and makes oblique shadows in the hot, dusty air. Like celestial illumination in a vast cathedral. Through sudden breaks in the wall of trees, flash startling ribbons of blue—the cobalt China Sea and the brilliant sheet of the sky above.

Down past the point where the metallic nerve trunk of the whole Bataan communications system dives sharply into the tangle of undergrowth and is lost. Rock switchboard. Just beyond is the still uncompleted pipe trench which offered us emergency shelter

from the twenty-seven bombers that morning early in January. And beyond that the now hardened crusts of great wounds in the earth where they did strike.

I pause at the sentried gate of the Mariveles naval area.

As the guard salutes, there comes a rattle of firing at the right.

"Been sluggin' all morning," he grins. "We get them—they get us."

"Bad?"

"Not good!"

I push on to the headquarters building. It is deserted. I single out the square of concrete close to the surface of the ground in the trampled field beyond. Just on this side of it will be an almost invisible entry, concealed by dun-colored sandbags and rubbish. Down through it on my belly and dropping plop in the middle of the tiny dugout containing the Naval switchboard and two startled officers—one of whom glares at me directly over the sights of a battered but entirely efficient service pistol.

He relaxes and grins. So do I, but less easily.

"Didn't hear you coming," he explains. "They are all over the place, and I didn't know but what another Tojo was dropping in for breakfast."

"I am very happy you didn't serve what you had on the menu," I say dryly, brushing off some of the dust. "In fact, I am happy to be able to be happy."

A drop on the board comes down. The other officer plugs in, listens a moment and turns around. His voice is husky. "They ambushed one of our patrols up there near Longaskawayan."

"Well," snaps the other, and the operator nods.

"Yeah—four. I don't know who they are yet."

We are silent for a moment, then I ask about the prisoners.

"They are up in Tunnel Four," informs the operator, "and I just heard that they ain't doing so well. Better hurry up if you want to ask them any questions this side of hell."

A few more words, and I clamber out the way I came in. In that brief interval the weather has changed. Corregidor is showing up as a gray bulk with indistinct limits at the far end. Carefully I drive along the road skirting the sharp rise facing the bay. Work

on the other tunnel still is in progress. Big portable air compressors bang and cough behind sandbag protection. Chow is in progress at Tunnel Four, the longest and widest of the bores to be driven thus far. I know that its steamy depths house Naval battalion personnel. What I don't know is that there is a field hospital at the far end.

The portable tracks of the narrow-gauge mine railroad still run down the center of the tunnel. On both sides the rocky ribs of the bore are hidden by the steel piping of double-deck bunks. Naval ratings occupy them in various stages of dress and undress, some sleeping soundly, their mouths sonorously open. Illumination is furnished by a string of bare electric globes down the center. The atmosphere is fetid. I step over the small, half-drowned rails of the mine track and edge past a mud-caked muck car.

But this is no mine. War is crammed with paradoxes, and this is one, for only a few feet from the mud-spattered car there is a glint of light upon bright instruments in a white pan. There are hemostats and there are scalpels. Scissors too. They are stained red.

A blanketed figure lies in motionless prostration on a narrow, wheeled operating table. His mud-caked boots protrude from beneath the blanket. A surgeon in rubber gloves has cleansed the gaping wound in the shoulder where a .50-caliber machine-gun bullet whipped its way in, through, and out.

From a stand, an inverted flask drains slowly as the glucose solution enters the blood stream through a needle in the brachial artery.

The man's inspirations are shallow and at long intervals. He seems to pull them up from his diaphragm. His face is the color of the bare slate rock behind him. His stiff black hair looks blacker in comparison. I shake my head. It's no use trying to question *him*.

But there is another, outside in an improvised ambulance. He, too, stopped machine-gun bullets during the landing. But he *stopped* them. They're in him yet, a pair of .30's. Still, he's quite cheerful about the whole thing, possibly because as one gob holds his closely shaven head, another plies bowl and spoon and with such good results that the Jap grins and answers our interpreter without hesitation.

He came from Shakusu during the present month, in company with seven other transport loads. He's a fine physical specimen. (If Japan still has men of this caliber left, we're in for jolts more severe than we've had yet.) He claims that only five to eight were in each barge, and knows of no more to come, at least for the time being! He's not such a bad fellow, really, and he does like that soup! I'm afraid that grin won't last very long; it'll fade from his wide, flat face. Human bodies, yellow or white, weren't intended as natural carriers for .30-caliber slugs.

As I leave the Naval base, dive bombers sing their sinister song above a low overcast. They might come through any moment. I stop the car and run without ceremony or dignity to a covered shelter dug in a compound surrounded by shattered buildings, and wonder whether I or that silent, slate-colored figure back in the tunnel will take the western trail first.

The answer is not long in coming. The bombers can't find a suitable hole in the overcast through which to zoom, and not wishing to invite the antiaircraft gunners to warm up on them by sound, they wing over and clear away. I reestablish myself in the car and make for the mountain road and its tree-covered shelter, munching some crackers that I managed to chisel out of the Navy the while. But somehow the crackers don't taste so good. Must be they were baked a bit too much, I reflect, as I secure the cover back on the tin.

### *Another Sunday*

And again I awaken at dawn. Once more, too, the knowledge that it was Sunday registered upon my consciousness.

Far down through the silent jungle trees, I heard the shrilling of the sergeants' whistles from pup tents and the variety of other shelters the men have built for themselves. They would be emerging in the pale half-light to form company front. Over the spine of the ridge the monotonous *put-put-put* of the Filipino Army Signal Corps gasoline electric generator plant pumped its way through the still air.

Surely everything sounded peaceful enough this particular Sabbath. I listened intently. No, not even the usual test firing of machine guns on the beaches. There was no artillery action the other way. Corregidor brooded southward beyond the Bataan jungle.

Still, it was Sunday....

I pulled the mosquito net loose and reached out for my peewee radio. Corregidor would be on the air. I was slightly late for the opening of the "Voice of Freedom" broadcast. The announcer was talking. I turned away to gather some tinder for a fire to make coffee as Colonel George had shown me.

As *who* had shown me?

I stopped in mid-step, my eyes blinking with disbelief. What's that the announcer was saying?

And then I emitted a whoop that must have startled the sentry halfway down the gulch to the right.

No, it was not Colonel George any longer—it was *General* George!

Yes, sure enough, I had heard aright. Briefly the announcer alluded to high spots in his career. I felt like shouting; I felt like crying. Surely no promotion in this man's war was more thoroughly earned than that just announced. I wondered if he had heard it. They did have radios operating for the "Voice of Freedom" broadcast at the advance camp. He must have heard it. I was too excited to coordinate properly, and the next moment found myself spitting and coughing noisily, expelling half a mouthful of shaving cream I had squeezed from the tube while the tooth paste lay undisturbed. I didn't care. That little guy . . .

They'd heard it down in the camp. The word had preceded me to the chow table under the trees. They were there—Colonel Churchill, Lieutenant Colonel Amis, Lieutenant Colonel Gregg, Major Johnson, Captain Caldwell, Captain Loetzel . . . It would only be human if within the heart of each of us there was a tinge of envy, because somehow that incomparable thrill of inner satisfaction that comes of promotion was to all of us a fickle distant thing as seemingly unattainable now as fortune, as improbable as rescue. Yet there was not a man at that table who would have ad-

vanced himself at the expense of him upon whom Fortune had smiled. It remained for Colonel Gregg to put it into words there at the breakfast table.

"In these times," he said quietly, "we seem to have done nearly everything wrong; but this—this promotion—well, it's enough to renew a man's faith. That's all."

Later that morning I was climbing the long communication ravine that led from the mess area to the officers' quarters tentage farther up the ridge. I heard a step behind me and turned, just as a familiar voice halted me.

"Hi ya there, young fellow."

I pivoted and looked straight into his somber black eyes. This time they were smiling. My glance dropped to his shoulders. His Colonel's eagles were still in evidence, having been embroidered into his shirt in Manila days.

I held out my hand. "Well, General," I said.

He gripped my hand hard.

"Ah," he said, "that's just a rumor. You can't believe everything you read in the newspapers, you know," he chided, giving me a little shove. It was a tender spot upon which we had belabored each other thoroughly in other days.

"Does that go for radio too?" I demanded.

He nodded.

"Even when it comes over the 'Voice of Freedom' from the Rock," I pursued ruthlessly, "the official voice of USAFFE?"

He simply smiled with a quiet friendly smile, and his eyes twinkled.

"But wait," I said. "Have you sent in your acceptance yet?"

He shook his head.

"Then, sir, I forbid your sending it in, unless I receive your promise"—I looked at him sternly—"that you will not even consider the appointment of anyone else as your aide."

"Aide!" he grunted. "What do I want with a godamaide?"

"Well, I don't know. But, want it or not, you have got one—haven't you?"

Again he chuckled. "Do you want it on official orders that you are hereby named my G.D. aide?"

"I do, sir, in just that way."

"What do you mean, just that way? Of course it would be just that way. There is no other kind of aide. I told you that before." He paused a few moments and then added, "Well, we'll see."

In my own mind there was no misgiving on that score, of course. The bond between us was of unspoken depth and structure, although in later days on Bataan he was to attempt to analyze it somewhat, and I think shrewdly enough, too. Within me had sprung up a deep conviction that this little heavily bearded man with the creased forehead and lined face was truly a soldier of destiny. Somehow, those prophetic concepts of mine hurdled the hostile barriers of Bataan and enshrined him in high places of authority. Some day he would head the Air Force—not to be confused with our pitiful remnant on the peninsula, but a force which his imagination, initiative, and daring had developed into one single irresistible weapon.

His gaze was directed toward ancient Cathay. He was convinced that the victory would come from thrusts initiated and nourished there, and that was where my vision ultimately placed him. So long as he gave indication of enjoying and preferring my company, so long as I felt that in some way I was contributing to his personal welfare and professional mission—that long would I remain with him. Never had he allowed me to entertain any doubt upon this point, and now as in Manila he said simply:

"You know what the answer to this is; but I still don't know what I would do with one of those things—one of those—"

"Yes, I know, one of those."

"Yes, one of those." He chuckled and laid his hand on my shoulder. "But I don't intend to be without you—if you do insist on being one of those—"

"Yes, one of those," I finished up.

### *Manga Bataan Coyan*

Morpheus had been a jittery thing of fits and starts and fizzles—suddenly shattered by the shrilling of the field telephone. My sleep

had not been long, such as it was, and in a trice I had jerked the mosquito netting from beneath me and was across the tent.

General George and Lefty Eads were at the Advanced Command Post west of Bataan Field, and it was the General's voice which came to me over the wire.

"They are having trouble in the west," he said shortly. "Call Colonel Gregg, and tell him we must have one hundred men of the Combat Team at once. They will entruck and proceed to the vicinity of kilometer post 193. Have you got that?"

"Yes, sir," and I repeated the message for surety's sake.

"Right. Will you get on that right away?"

"Yes, sir." And as quickly as I heard his terminating click, I gave the crank of the field set a fierce twist and asked for Operations.

Captain Lunde's voice answered almost at once. I repeated the message.

"Will you get on to K.J. at once to save time. I am dressing and will notify Horace Greely right away."

"O.K."

And I knew that Captain Lunde would be even then picking his way quickly along the path across the company road and over to Colonel Gregg's tent. Quickly I pulled my own clothes on and, seizing my flashlight and gun belt, took the path to Captain Greely's quarters. Rousing him and Captain Whitfield, I repeated the order.

"Well, I guess that's it," said Greely quietly. And he poured his long form into his breeches, strapping on puttees and directing his orderly in the packing of his personal kit.

"Did the General say how long we might remain there?" asked Whitfield.

I shook my head. "No, but he didn't say anything about taking camp gear."

"Mess kits?"

"Well, I should certainly say so, because you might like to eat."

"Yes, certainly take mess kits," said Greely. "Do all the others know?"

I nodded. "I have roused everyone I could think of. Listen."

Through the jungle we could hear the shrilling of the sergeants' whistles.

Horace nodded. "They will be ready by the time we get down there," he said, pitching further ammunition into his musette bag while Whitfield tested the blade of his jungle knife.

"You are going up, Whit?" I asked him.

Under the torches illuminating the busy scene, I could see his pale blue eyes blinking.

"Oh, sure!"

"But you don't have to. You are not assigned," I protested.

"Yes, I know; but I want to take a look around."

That was like Whitfield. Quiet and deliberate, he nevertheless sought danger and excitement with a calm avidity that seemed almost paradoxical.

"I will be seeing you up there," I promised. "Not tonight, but soon. I have to stay here until I get permission or get my relief in here."

"Be lookin' for you," he said, strapping his musette on his back and testing the bolt of his rifle.

There was a moment of awkward silence as each man cast a final look about his quarters. I knew what was in their minds. Each man silently was asking himself whether he was looking for the last time upon those quarters, which had sheltered him for many nights now. The row on the west coast was serious. We knew it; and, had we been toying with the notion that it was simply another landing, the very fact that reserves were being called out of the Headquarters Administration section effectively converted that notion into something far more grim and realistic.

"Let's go," said Horace Greely simply.

Without another word, we all trudged out of the tents and down the jungle trail toward the Company area.

The night was quiet—the slight breeze from the east carrying away from us sounds of firing on the west coast, while from the northern front came only the occasional double explosion of the 155's working in pairs—and small sounds carried far. Now and again came the clank of metal against metal: the slap of a jungle knife against a mess kit, or the click of a rifle bolt being given a

quick test. Shadowy forms moved out of lateral paths and joined our little procession. The jungle was alive.

Where the paths came in from the Headquarters Company, the line of men was rapidly extending along the curved jungle road. A glow of dozens of cigarettes told of the taut nerves of those almost invisible soldiers.

With one critical measuring eye upon the available supply of .30-caliber ammunition, the C.O.'s had issued the instruction that each man would be allowed the munificent total of five shots with which to achieve firing familiarity with his piece, and a marksman-ship calculated to ensure sending the steel-jacketed bullets at least in the approximate direction of the general enemy. Five cartridges! And that, in the aggregate, constituted an expenditure we could ill afford.

At Interceptor Command Headquarters, where other detachments joined in, the column halted while Captain Greely and his lieutenants entered the Operations tent for a study of the maps and a final word. It was Captain Greely's idea that the company should leave the trucks a kilometer or so this side of the indicated destination and proceed on foot. Colonel Gregg listened without comment until the conclusion. Then, in his kindly way, he suggested to Captain Greely in an aside that this might not be wise because his men, undernourished and poorly conditioned as they were to the rigors of a campaign, might not march well under pack in difficult country even a few kilometers, and might arrive in the battle area too exhausted for combat. Captain Greely quickly altered his orders. Back in the road he called the ragged line to attention.

Instead of one hundred men, there were half as many more. Well, they'd be needed.

"Men," he said, "we are going to the west front, as a reserve unit. How long we will stay, I do not know. What we will find, I am not sure, except that it is not going to be a quiet place. Be sure that you have got ammunition; be sure that your guns are clean; and be sure that you have got water. By following orders, you will probably save your own lives as well as those of others. Are you ready?"

The jungle reverberated to the chorus of assent.

"Then, let's move out."

Instantly the whistles sounded again, and the uneven line shuffled down toward the bamboo gate and the trucks waiting on the main road. Beside me I heard Captain Lunde's soft curse.

"Coxey's Army!" he gritted as he swung back to the Operations tent.

True enough: Coxey's Army. The bitterness in my mind gave cynical paraphrase to a related but opposite thought expressed in the linguistic music of a softer tongue:

"'Māngā bataan coyan.'"

My lips were repeating the phrase in the queer mixture of hesitancy and gliding liquids of the Tagalog dialect. A tall, soft-eyed Tagalog—a stripling in command of a platoon of Philippine Army infantry—had taught it to me and interpreted it during a discussion of the meaning of *bataan* (which is pronounced in three syllables with the accent on the second, thus: Ba-ta'an).

There were numerous interpretations of the word he had explained. *Bata* may mean youth, or a flowering or trained youth; and with *-an* added may mean place of flowering or trained youth. In military parlance, a company commander to distinguish his own men from those of other commanders on the parade ground would point to them in the distance, with the words, "Māngā bataan coyan," meaning literally, "Those are the flower of my trained youth."

I was standing alone on the jungle road. My eyes followed the ragged shadow line until the last, ill equipped man dissolved in a cloud of gray dust that drifted into the jungle.

"Māngā bataan coyan," I muttered slowly, and turned away.

### Manila Call

The withering sun had swung into the west and was slowly foundering in the China Sea. Off to the left, one of those queer unseen tropical lizards broke into an idiotic cross between a donkey's bray and the rattle of a ratchet operated with great de-

termination and no oil. Then suddenly this cacophony ceased, and the whole jungle world seemed to wait in silent expectancy.

That was my imagination, I was sure. True, there was a "buzz" on, but it concerned only a very restricted number of Air Corps personnel, and a few at Corregidor. We had to notify them there, otherwise the antiaircraft people properly might shoot first and enquire afterwards. (As it turned out, we were to come perilously close to disaster on this point, not once, but twice.) For days our reconnaissance, agents' reports, and miscellaneous information had described concentrations of enemy aircraft on Nichols Field and some on Nielson. The numbers varied from day to day. Some agents' reports also gave the Yacht Club off Manila Boulevard as an anchorage for Japanese seaplanes. The target was most inviting. The weather looked right. General George had communicated with Corregidor and obtained approval for a raid on these concentrations when the time seemed opportune. There were most explicit and emphatic instructions on one particular point: we were to observe rigidly the international agreements regarding "open cities"—which meant not one bomb or machine-gun bullet must be allowed to strike Manila City or its suburbs. The Yacht Club was out. The General carefully explained. The pilots understood.

And so this was to be the night.

The moon would be good, but not too good. Visibility should be excellent. There was only enough breeze to stir the jungle into gentle movement.

Every precaution had been taken to forestall the Sakdalistas. This day, no orders had been given in plain language. Even the warning to the antiaircraft batteries at Corregidor had been phrased in queer double-talk jargon which only Captain Lunde and our Air Liaison Officer on the Rock, Captain "Bill" Cummings, could understand.

Silly, it was, that jargon: something Bill and Ossie had originated when they were in training school together. It was not "pig Latin" but something infinitely more difficult to solve by ears alone. Basically, words were broken into syllables, and the end of every first syllable was terminated with a certain consonant, while the be-

ginning of each succeeding syllable began with another chosen consonant. Even when sentences were spoken slowly, the straight English was completely lost to a bewildered listener. And for these two, who had perfected the jargon, entire conversations were possible without enlightening "outsiders" to the slightest degree. Not infrequently they amused themselves by indulging in outright insults at the expense of exasperated listeners. I have seen General Sutherland torn between realization of the sheer necessity of speed in double-talk transmission over wires almost certainly tapped, and impatience with such thoroughly nonmilitary procedure. But the proof of the pudding was in the eating, and the General grinningly confessed one day that he had been unable to decipher the infantile garble. Of course, secrets of lasting importance were not entrusted to this makeshift double talk, since it was possible that the Japanese would monitor it on phonograph discs and send it for analysis to the linguistics laboratory in Berlin, which would have penetrated it with relative ease.

Our warning to antiaircraft that P-40's would be swinging over Corregidor some time after eight o'clock in the evening to gain altitude over the island before striking off across the bay had been transmitted in this jargon. All other orders had been direct. We had not trusted the telephone lines or radio. There was no testing of aircraft radio equipment. Even the bombs were not brought out until after dark.

Then silently shapes began to move about within the area of the camouflaged revetments cut into the jungle at the head of Bataan Field. Only occasional muttered words could be heard as the supply of fragmentation bombs was accumulated. Then there was a rattle of exhausts as little tractors tugged the black, birdlike shapes from jungle lairs and slowly pulled them down the wide clearing toward the field. Readied were pilots Woolery, Stinson, Hall, Obert, Baker, Ibold, and Brown.

The bombs were loaded. The pilots were ready. Not a light showed. Even the improvised field running lights were left off. A final quick inspection, mostly by the practiced fingers of the ground crews. Then:

"All clear!"

The quiet of the night was shattered by the roar of P-40 engines. Immediately it advanced to full power. There would be no warm-up time to warn the watchers inevitably stationed some place in the concealing jungle. A heavy wall of dust followed the black shapes that raced down the length of the field. We dared not risk a possible revelation of our plans by any extra anti-dust treatment late in the day. We had to take a chance.

We did.

Seven P-40's were scheduled for the raid. Only six departed. Blinded by the swirling dust from the wheels and airscrews of the preceding 40's, Pilot Ibold misguessed his runway limits. One wheel of the speeding fighter slipped crazily into the rough.

At the far end of the field our hearts rose in our throats. Someone yelled hoarsely. The others could only stare fascinated as the death-loaded machine dipped her wing—spun—half recovered, then whipped around in a great cascade of dust . . .

There was a blinding stab of flame. Then two more. The hot night air beat to the triple explosion of the three fragmentation bombs slung under that wing of the P-40. The three on the opposite wing failed to explode.

Three great geysers of dust rose and blotted out the scene. Only a throbbing red glow in the heart of it all marked the site of the accident to which our improvised crash wagons now raced.

At the hospital they said Ibold would live. He was badly burned and suffering from shock. Ground looping at take-off speed alone was enough to terminate the existence of a pilot with just ordinary luck to draw on; but a combined ground loop and concentrated bombing was not enough to exhaust Ibold's supply of luck. He would live, and live to fight again.

We heard the steady clean whine of the 40's gaining altitude over Corregidor. We weren't to know until the next day of the case of nerves from which the Rock had suffered. The warnings had reached the batteries concerned all right, but apparently the word had not been passed over the entire island; there was no particular reason why it should have been; in fact, there were many reasons why the restriction should have been exactly as planned. Nevertheless, certain officers whose sense of importance greatly

exceeded the degree of rank they carried, caused the air-raid sirens to be sounded and demanded with heat and volume that the anti-aircraft batteries be opened on seen aircraft spiraling higher and higher over Corregidor.

Before anything occurred, however, the P-40 pilots struck off and bored through the soft moonlit night for Nielson and Nichols.

Manila was strung out like a jeweled necklace along the eastern border of the bay. From Calumpit clear around to Cavite Point the lights were showing in serene contempt for the possibility of an American air raid. But with increasing puzzlement the pilots noted that the lights in the vicinity of the target area were not distinct. In fact, they were fuzzy and diffused.

A ground mist, completely absent on Bataan, covered the low swampy area of the Parañaque and all the adjacent country.

That was bad. Still, this was no time to turn back. They would hit it, anyway. And hit it they did. In the words of one of the pilots, they "put the lights out."

Returning the favor the Japanese had shown us so often during the dark opening days of the war, the six pilots swooped in and accompanied the wailing of the startled sirens with the crashing of bombs on the two airfields. The flight had separated, part going over Nichols, part over Nielson. At ten thousand feet the ground mist was completely obliterative. Very well then, cut to seven thousand. But that was no better. Cut to three thousand then! And they did, even less than that. . . . So low were they that the detonation blasts from their bombs pumped savagely against the racing aircraft as they whipped through the misty moonlight, now suddenly charged with leaping flame and great rolling clouds of gray and black smoke.

One pilot saw a newly constructed building on Nichols Field; apparently an operations office. The lights were on—but not after the direct hit that shattered buildings into flying debris.

Back for another pass. . . . This time with rattling machine guns sending flaming tracers into enemy aircraft grounded below—our tormenters that had for so many days wheeled in lazy insolence above our lines, directing artillery fire upon the troops clinging grimly to their makeshift field fortifications. Already flames danced

wickedly among the enemy machines. From a dozen different points antiaircraft guns fired wildly into the night; and where flaming muzzles betrayed their presence, the speeding night raiders cut in with hammering machine guns.

Long after the 40's, their ammunition exhausted, had turned their sharp noses westward for the run back across the bay, the bewildered enemy continued to fire everything within reach into the smoke-charged air.

One after another, the fighters came in. At Cabcaben Field two quickly reloaded and roared into the night again, but this time it was hopeless to attempt to locate a specific target on the fields. The whole area was covered with dense smoke that gave no view of ground installations.

Sufficient unto the night was the evil thereof.

All through the dark hours the fires raged.

That there had been damage, we could not doubt. But the actual extent of our success was unimagined, even by us. Intercepted Japanese messages, plus reports by our agents, brought back fantastic tales. Actually, there was little doubt but that, with ground forces to follow up our surprise attack, the city of Manila would have fallen into our hands once more. The dislocation of the Japanese military establishment had been profound and widespread. So complete was the surprise, so disproportionately extensive the casualties and damage from such a short raid, and so great the joy of the people on the following day, that the Japanese hurriedly formed defense zones and prepared for an onslaught, fearful that, even without an attack, the population would rise up and wipe them out.

Large supplies of vitally needed fuel and oil had been destroyed on the fields. Thirty-seven grounded aircraft of various types were riddled by bombs or by machine-gun strafing. Others were damaged by the resulting fires. More than three hundred casualties were listed by the Japanese, who claimed that numerous Filipinos had been struck.

Our agents disproved this and brought in proof that the majority of casualties had been suffered by enemy air personnel and other soldiers quartered at the borders of the fields. They told us, too,

of the shouting and singing and dancing in the streets—of the unrestrained joy of the Filipinos and of the fear and anxiety of the Japanese.

It was not until after the raid that we learned how closely we had flirted with disaster—not from the Japanese, but at the hands of our own troops. In some way which we were at a loss to explain, our warnings intended for the antiaircraft officer at Corregidor never had been delivered to him. Consequently, as our unsuspecting pilots flew in the darkness to the fortified area bristling with antiaircraft guns, the gunners themselves were in a fine predicament, believing that they recognized the sound of P-40's but being unaware that any were to be abroad that night. The antiaircraft officer warned them not to switch on the searchlights, for by co-ordination the guns would be fired immediately a pick-up was registered. He rushed to General Sutherland. Then it was discovered that even General Sutherland had not been informed. But this quick-thinking officer at once took the responsibility for ordering that no guns be fired. (As a consequence of this definitely unhealthy situation, a review of our whole system of coordinating such warnings was held, resulting in what we believed to be a foolproof plan. Yet truly, especially in war, the best laid plans of mice and men . . . A repetition was to occur at a critical moment six weeks later.)

We were to learn from subsequent reports that this raid actually had proved so disastrous for the enemy that he had ordered a general dispersion of all forces in the Manila area in order to reduce the possibility of a repetition.

Six P-40's! Under similar surprise conditions, the whole course of the Philippine war might have been altered by sixty.

Sixty. . . . The United States was going to make fifty thousand in 1942.

*Tuesday January 27th*

They certainly slapped things around last night. The artillery was busy most of the time. Dawn tumbled in with earth-shaking

thuds. Mortars from the Rock. Shells from everyone and dive bombers from the enemy. No one was left out this time. Fragments sang their ghost whistles through the jungle from Mariveles to Bataan Field. Our "Coxey's Army" had a rough party yesterday, we discover. Bombed and strafed up near kilometer post 191. They're veterans now, poor kids.

### *Wednesday January 28th*

It doesn't let up.

Dive bombers have ranged the front continuously. And they don't forget us. Plastered the west and south.

Verified that the Japanese have hit Rabaul too hard for the Australians to hold long. May be gone by this time.

But word that we've begun mauling a convoy in Macassar Straits. The news gets better with every message. God! Can we take a little good news!

Am I becoming mental? Today, all without warning, I was seized with something like rage at the sight of footprints in the dust. They belong to Curtis Hindson, fair-haired, blue-eyed Reuters correspondent of friendly ways and clipped speech. He was almost lost in the evacuation from Manila and failed to get to Corregidor with the others. I have made him at home with us. His shoes have homemade soles from automobile tire outer casing rubber. Hence the queer tracks they leave. Wherever I go, I find them in the dust. He always is just ahead in the jungle somewhere. Why must he come this way, anyway? Can't he stay put? No, of course not. No correspondent worth his salt stays put. And Curtis is worth his salt. A bacteriologist. And a fine musician. What's the matter with me, anyway?

### *Aglaloma*

Instructions that came over the field wire from "Palace Advance" were brief enough: "Make a personal survey of the First

FEAF Combat Team on the Aglaloma front and report back upon the general condition and capabilities of the Air Corps fighting men on that front."

The General had set no date, but I assumed that he meant the immediate present, and forthwith I prepared for the reconnaissance. Beside my "bed," ready and loaded, were two rifles, identical in design, outward appearance, and weight. To the casual eye, both were standard bolt-action .30-caliber Springfields. But there was a difference. One actually was an armory model .22-caliber training rifle. I smiled as I reached for this gun. I could imagine General George's caustic comments. He already had indulged in a few of them.

"Kid stuff," he had muttered disdainfully when I told him of my plan. "This is a war, not a tin-can shooting expedition for target practice."

"I propose to demonstrate the superior value of brains over mere power," I had defended, laughing. "You see, the Japanese snipers who are responsible for so many of our casualties use a .25-caliber rifle which has a very much lighter report than that of our .30's or our .45 automatics. The snipers always cease firing when they hear U.S. arms being discharged constantly, with the result that you cannot get a bearing on them from sound; and because they are invisible in their perfect camouflage you can get no bearing on them whatever."

"So—"

"Simple, sir," I said, snapping my fingers. "I'll do a one-man infiltration, firing this .22, and they will continue to snipe, believing the while that my gun actually is another Japanese rifle . . . They won't even bother to shoot in my direction."

The General had grunted in his beard, and his eyes had sought Lefty pleadingly.

"What's war coming to when you propose to fight it like that?" he'd muttered.

Well, this was a chance to put my theory to practical test. Slipping into my web belt, weighted down with its usual sidearms, ammunition, jungle knife, first-aid kit and water canteen, I reflected that practical research was indeed desirable—but the results

of experimentation could be too final in case of error. This thought left me even more somber as I took a final look about the tent, strapped on my helmet, and left for the Intelligence Center in order to pick up Sergeant Roulston. He repeatedly had expressed a desire to visit the front lines, and this was his opportunity.

Rapidly we dropped down the steep zigzag road to sea level at Mariveles. Then, climbing again, we wound our way above the harbor and into the region of Longaskawayan and its companion point, Naiklec. Above the rattling jolt of the heavy car on the war-torn road we could hear sudden bursts of small-arms fire to the left; but the heavy tropical growth, dust-weighted and lifeless, kept us from catching even a momentary view of the action our ears told us was occurring between the hidden Japanese and the Air Corps Infantry of the 3rd Squadron, the 20th Squadron, some detachments of Marines and two battalions of the 45th Infantry. Repeatedly we saw dust-plastered troops resting under the trees. They showed no interest in the firing, nor in us. Once, a spent bullet whined dismally above us into the sky.

We passed the command post of the 21st Squadron at kilometer 184.7, and beyond that went through a battalion of Philippine Scouts.

We rounded a sharp curve, cut like a great groove in the timbered hillside—and bounced violently as I suddenly pulled the wheel and we headed into the rough. One, two, three ambulances roared in the opposite direction, with slight regard for traffic. The dust pall precluded further progress for some minutes. Now, clearly, we could hear the almost continual rattle of firing, punctuated by an occasional heavy thud.

"Mortar," I guessed, and Sergeant Roulston nodded.

There was need for the ambulances. Before we could proceed, a fourth jolted past. Then the dust cleared, and we proceeded a short distance to a junction. Here a military policeman, perfectly camouflaged with the powder from the road, directed us to the right. As we moved forward, a battered Ford, minus top, hood, and front fenders, clattered out of a side road to the left.

"Where's the dressing station?" bawled the driver, and the sentry waved him the way we had come. The vehicle jerked into

motion, and we noticed that the back-seat passenger was holding his right arm at an extended angle. The elbow joint was completely blown out. He was grinning. He wouldn't grin long when the anesthesia of shock wore off. It would be different story, poor chap.

We moved forward and drove steadily for some minutes. The increased volume of firing told of our proximity to Aglaloma Point, that hot spot of the west coast where, ever since the initial landing on the 18th, our forces had fought unceasingly to contain the enemy within the precincts of two points of land north and south of Aglaloma Bay. Out of the dusty air loomed kilometer post 191. It was here that "Coxey's Army" had left their busses, to trek by jungle trails to battle positions. Initially, only some Philippine Scouts and Air Corps Infantry of the 21st and 34th Pursuit squadrons held this area. Then a force of the 803rd Engineers (as tough a fighting outfit as ever set foot on Bataan!) and reinforcements from the 45th Infantry were rushed in to stem the Japanese advance which threatened to sever the Bagac-Mariveles road. This, I was to learn, was the objective of the landing; and sprawling in Japanese characters across a captured enemy air photograph showing this area of the peninsula was the note: "This road must be cut at all costs." With still greater pressure from the Japanese, the 101st Antitank outfit and the 1st FEAF Combat Team were added to meet the storm.

Now we dropped off the main road and, turning sharply to the left, eased quietly down a dust-padded trail toward the China Sea and Aglaloma Bay. There was no traffic—which was well, for the jungle road winding between the moss-dappled trunks of trees was single-car width most of the distance. Still, we began to wonder if we were on the right track. We stopped, then drove on almost immediately. The clatter of firing was dead ahead. Beyond the next turn was a miniature mountain of empty tin cans.

"Salmon," sniffed Sergeant Roulston. "It's the Army, all right."

A few yards farther on we came on a field kitchen manned by unspeaking Filipinos.

"Where's the command post?" I shouted.

Several looked our way, but essayed no reply. Then Roulston made a logical remark:

"Well, sir, it must be forward. It can't be back."

Unable to refute this sound observation, I put the car into gear and pushed on. Now we came to a motor park with road-whitened command cars, staff cars, and trucks parked in garages of close-knit foliage. Filipino mechanics were probing the entrails of two medium trucks. A Filipino sentry approached.

"Orders are to leave cars here, sir."

We found an unoccupied "stall," strapped on our equipment, and slogged down the trail toward what was now a continuous din of firearms. Through the general level of sound came an insistent near-by *cra-ack* at regular intervals.

Z-z-z-zing . . .

"I'm afraid we're acclimated to bombs," I suggested. "This invisible mosquito stuff . . ."

"That one came from quite a ways. But that fellow over there is . . ."

The sergeant left the rest of the sentence hanging in thin air as again we made a quick, undignified bow. Two yards in front and over us, the branch of a small tree suddenly ceased to be suspended from its apparent trunk and dropped to the ground. At the same instant, seemingly, came that same sharp crack off to the right.

"As you were saying—" I chuckled, keeping my head low.

"As I was saying—that fellow over there sounds like a Jap to me, and now I know it. Shall we run for it, sir?"

"Come on!"

We did.

Fifty yards deeper in the jungle we came upon the command post. Familiar voices greeted us from almost unfamiliar faces. Captain Greely, Captain Whitfield, and several lieutenants from the Little Baguio outfit welcomed us to their battle station with consistently cheerful and frequently ribald expressions. Their features were lean and bearded. They showed the effects of the more or less exclusive diet represented by the mountain of tin cans we'd seen earlier. But there was nothing wrong with the morale here.

In an improvised easy-chair at the center of the group, with his back to an enormous tree, was a nonchalant individual in campaign-soiled uniform, his head bare and his languid eye seeing far more than its apparent lackluster indicated.

I shook the indifferent hand of Major Dudley Strickler of the 45th Infantry, the commanding officer of the Aglaloma show. The lackadaisical exterior of this man startled me. This was hardly my concept of a combat commanding officer of a hot area. But appearances were deceiving—quite deceiving. Major Strickler was a most capable officer, as the would-be Japanese invaders actually contained within the few hundred yards at the end of the point could well testify. Despite their fanatical determination, they had not succeeded in penetrating inland even to the proximity of the main road they were supposed to cut; and whipping them at their own game of jungle fighting, Strickler's relatively green men had been so organized and directed as to reverse the direction of movement and pen the Japanese in a series of pockets bordering Aglaloma Bay. Day after day the bitter struggle went on. This was the first real demonstration of the prolonged maniacal resistance the Japanese troops were wont to display once they had gained the slightest foothold in jungle country. We were to know it later in the Solomons, at Buna, Lae, Salamaua, Madang, Wewak, Timor . . .

Came a heavy crash from somewhere off to the west. As if it had been a signal, the lethargic major gathered himself and leaped from his low-seated place of repose.

"They've moved that mortar! . . . Messenger!" he bawled. "Get forward and tell them to resume the old firing position until they get orders from me to change it." He spun around and shouted to two Filipino water boys. "And you, Joe! Get forward to that mortar with some water. Those boys will be spitting dust." And to two others: "And what about their chow? Hop now!"

That was the Strickler I had heard about.

"I'd like to go forward to the advance positions, Major," I said, explaining my mission.

He nodded. "Well, that won't take long," he said gloomily; but this time his seeming low spirits did not deceive me. "They're neighbors of ours . . . Hear that fellow?"

And as he spoke I heard the faint snap of the bolt action of a rifle, followed almost at once by a report. But it was like that other *cra-ack* that we had heard up the trail, definitely lighter than the discharge of American pieces. I nodded.

"He's just over there yonder." The Major jerked his head to the right without an accompanying glance. "He's been there four days. Sniper. Tryin' to register a bull's-eye on one of us here . . . Not particular which one."

"You mean . . . ?"

I heard Whitfield chuckle beside me. "Yes," he said, reaching over to unfasten my insignia. "Maybe it's these he's trying to draw a bead on. We don't wear 'em around here because they reflect sunlight. You wouldn't last five minutes where we're going."

I told him of the sniping branch up the trail we had come.

"Could be—could be . . ." he said in his characteristic, unhurried fashion. "Ready?"

I nodded. "Yes. . . . But this sniper. Why, he's over there only about twenty-five yards. How come you don't get him!"

"You'll see why," he promised. "Besides, we'd sort of miss him. He's been so neighborly."

A small party of us led by Whitfield moved off down the trail. It was strange how the trees deadened the sound from the front. Where the foliage was dense, we could converse in normal tones, but where there was a break in the jungle the sound thundered in our ears. We came to a fork in the trail. To the left, a Bren gun carrier was parked under a camouflaged cover, its crew lounging, its weapons at the ready. To the right, a less distinct trail snaked away and was lost in the thickets. Down this trail burst a leaf-shaking thump of sound.

"Mortar," yelled Whit. "Ours. . . . Just beyond. Listen."

We waited. Above the flat rattle of musketry and the angry snare of machine guns came an echoing thump, this time distance-softened.

"Another messenger for Tojo's ancestors," grinned Whit, and we moved on.

Now our trail turned to the right, and on the opposite side, far below, I could see the sheen of Aglaloma Bay. We were on the

ridge of the steep heights the Japanese had scaled in the blackness of the night of January 18. Voices called out to us. We halted and peered. But there was only the jungle. Half-teasing words were followed by chuckles. Then we saw them—but only after they deliberately revealed themselves. Our erstwhile Air Corps troops, once the doughty and colorful high-hats-of-the-hangars and cocks-of-the-cockpits, peered from dirt-caked faces amid jungle-laced fox holes and log defense points so inseparable a part of the primitive Aglaloma terrain that, while friend and foe alike knew of their presence well enough, the knowledge could rarely be verified by sight unless there was a reason for permitting this.

We stopped and, squatting to avoid the thin, invisible singsong in the air around us, passed the time of day with these already veteran doughboys.

"Didja bring up that sirloin steak I ordered?" barked one.

"A gourmand, that's what *he* is," growled another. "Always eating—"

"Hey! How does it feel to have a bath? I've heard of them things."

"Tell the General not to send us more than a squadron—we can't land 'em except along the top of this log."

From a dugout beneath a mass of fallen trees came a new one.

"I was going to be an altitude flier. Oh, boy! Lookit me now!"

"Quiet—you earthworm!"

And so it went. Some asked when they would be relieved. When advised that it might be a while yet, they merely grinned or expressed a philosophical resignation in unphilosophical adjectives.

"An' keep your head down," warned a machine gunner lying beside his bullet-belted weapon in a shallow pit that covered a good expanse of the rock-strewn beach below. "They're dusting off the trail up there a little farther ahead."

Reinforcing his words with undeniable insistence, machine guns and other arms the length and breadth of the point broke into sudden fury that transcended in volume anything we had yet encountered. Through this hoarse orchestra of war rose the thin whine-like whistle of fifes threading through the blare of brass and the beating of drums. Plainly discernible were the voices of

the different calibers: The short, flat-sided snap of the Japanese .25's, the staccato cracks of the .30 Springfields and Garands mingled with the same-toned .30 machine guns and semiautomatics and tommies: then the strident viciousness of the .50's blasting frenziedly, and thudding in bass roar through them all the slow, deliberate pound of the mortar beating the tempo for death's dance.

"See what I mean?" queried our machine-gunner friend, peering intently forward to determine if this was the prelude to an attempted break-through, or just another one of those endlessly recurring cyclic bursts of activity.

We saw, all right; or at least we understood. And we waited.

Ten minutes later the jungle was as quiet as a flower-filled meadow on a Sunday afternoon.

"It's like that," said the gunner. "These Nips is smart birds. They don't fire very much when it's quiet like now. But let some of the lads forward open up, then so's to mask their own racket, they'll swap their .25's for tommies and let us have it from every tree in the place. Quick's we ease off, they do, too. An' it leaves you wonderin' where th' hell all the shootin' was comin' from!"

We could understand that, too.

Cautiously our little safari pushed on. But not far. Traffic was coming the other way: walking wounded first, then stretcher cases—products of that last slug fest. I heard a muttered exclamation.

"Well, I'll be—"

The third stretcher bore the chalklike features of one of the lads of our own party. He'd been a dozen yards ahead.

We resumed. The air still hung rank with burned powder. But there was another odor now. And when the wind came off the sea and blew inland toward us from the point, the smell of powder seemed to recede before this new wave, nauseating in its power.

From the right came the rattling announcement of a machine gun. Immediately unseen others took up the chorus. And that old flat *cra-ack*. Again it was so close that at times we could hear the snap of the bolt action.

Whit's hand waved us down. We dropped. Leaves fluttered from the tree above our heads. Cautiously he raised his head and

stared between the bullet-scarred trunks of two trees. For several minutes he remained unmoving. My own position was such that I could see about fifty yards into the interior of the point. Obviously one guess was as good as another as to which of the near-by trees contained snipers. Their perfect camouflage precluded anything but accidental detection by us on the ground.

This was my chance.

Quietly I slipped off the trail and into the thickets in the direction of the .25-caliber reports.

But hardly had I moved into a favorable position before the shooting stopped. Nor did it resume. I became uneasy. What might want to move on.

One tree was as good as another.

*Bang*, went my piece.

The report sounded ridiculously shallow and ineffectual. The slug whined into the tree I had selected.

And immediately there was an answer.

Was I right? Did that one branch move every time the bolt action snapped? Was it imagination? Anyway . . .

*Bang!*

And again the answering report. *And* the jerk of the branch—a small one high up, but only a few feet from a natural crotch that would offer protection from the trail, at least.

I used up a clip, congratulating myself on the success of my plan. But it was premature. Now he shot *at* me, not *with* me. He must have seen me. His bullets were coming close enough to indicate who was the target, but not too close—just right to make it a good game. I could see my own shots registering close to the crotch.

Faster now.

There came another of those cyclic bursts of shooting all over the Point. And in that interval we warmed to the job.

*Thud*. . . .

A white scar was ripped in the tree above me only a short distance over my helmet. Now, that was what you might term a seriously intentioned piece of aiming. I looked a bit anxiously to-

ward the trail—to see a broad leaf jerk to a neatly patterned hole that hadn't been there before.

Not so good. He knew where I was. He also seemed to know my way back!

I loaded a fresh clip and, steadyng, emptied the whole thing in careful, deliberate covering of the crotch area.

No answer....

Another clip.

Still no answer. Now, what did that mean? And what was that thin black stick poked out of the branches near the crotch? A rifle barrel? I wanted to think so. Wanted to hard enough to make it a reality in my imagination, at least. But was it true?

So intent was I upon the stick that for a moment I was unaware of what was happening around me. And plenty was.

The firing had picked up in intensity—and proximity. A ricochetting bullet sang viciously from the left. Now what? An attack?

There was no time for further deliberation.

Down.... Flatten, brother.

And down I went, digging with both hands into the moist green and black of the rich jungle floor. Two sodden logs, but big enough to have sound hearts, gave me protection from a snapping spray of bullets that cut in—*mostly from the rear!*

"Hey! . . . Hey, you!" came a strangled voice close to the ground.

From the direction of the trail one of the privates, a little Jewish chap I had known at Little Baguio, was wriggling along on his stomach. Between wriggles he would signal frantically with his hands.

"Don't shoot that damn' thing again," he cried. "Sounds just like a Nip .25, and you've got all our guys back of us shooting at the sound. They think they've got a Nip on the ground. They'll cut this place to ribbons unless you make 'em think you're dead."

"Boy, will I!"

There were all the accouternments for playing dead in a most realistic way. A wave of machine-gun bullets bit sudden splinters from the top of the log on my right.

Research frame of mind. Bah! Always something to spoil it—some unexpected factor. Now here I stood a first-class chance of being the guy who'd survived the whole Manila campaign and Bataan so far, only to walk in and literally ask my own pals to weight me with lead!

To my right a tree with a bole at least three inches in diameter shuddered in sudden ague—and the top half doubled slowly over the lower half as though tired of the whole thing. Fifty-caliber bullets had sawed it through.

I dug some more. And then some.

Perspiration bathed me hotly.

The whole thing was over in a few moments, really.

With that same startling suddenness, the volume of fire slid off into a few scattered shots and then silence. That is, silence except for Whit's chuckles and his drawled observation that I had scared *them* plenty when the report of my popgun had sounded so close. A Japanese sniper actually that close certainly would have accounted for several of Whit's group.

"But before we could do anything about it, our fellows from all around began to make things too hot for any of us to move. Guess they figured, too, that you were a Nip," explained one of the boys, a sergeant.

"Well, I can tell you how one feels," I said earnestly. "Anyway, I think I got that bird."

"Maybe . . . maybe," allowed Whit. "If he doesn't take some shots at us on the way back, I'll think somebody got him, anyway. . . . Shall we go?"

Our party now was two members short. I enquired. The little Jewish soldier jerked his thumb back along the trail.

"Dressing station for him, sir. He got in the way of a fast one from the Nips."

"Dead?"

"Wasn't."

Suddenly the atmosphere whooped savagely.

"Mortar again," barked Whit, dropping and motioning for us to do likewise. "We're close enough to get a little of that," he muttered.

Hardly had he spoken when the air buzzed and droned. There were solid thuds against trees; sharp swishing noises, as if some giant were beating a branch through the matted jungle. He grinned.

"See what I mean?"

We rose, and dropped again. For off to our right a sniper cut loose with a one-man fusillade. It was a single fire alternated with some automatic.

"O.K. Now duck and we'll get across this hot spot," directed Whit.

Shambling like apes with the tummy ache, we cleared an exposed place where bullets had cleaned the foliage completely. But if snipers were covering that spot, they must have been busy re-loading, for we didn't attract a single slug.

The jungle became denser. Came, too, a perceptible thickening of the odor. For another fifty yards we ran along doubled. Then suddenly our trail terminated at an observation post telephone station at the very extreme point of our advance. All of the firing now was on our right and slightly to the rear. This post actually flanked the enemy's positions. Two red-eyed soldiers lay in a litter of equipment, dirty clothing, and empty tin cans among the protecting roots of a huge tree. Between phone calls they drooled choice, un-English adjectives, somewhere in the midst of which could be discerned an occasional noun and verb. This flow, directed to us while they nonchalantly cleaned their rifles, apprised us that, if we didn't mind having our own heads blown off, we could go somewhere else: right there we would make a mess and also probably give away to the Japs the exact location of the post by falling around in silly places.

Obligingly we moved in close behind the huge tree. The bullets sang their thin song on both sides. I stepped on something that rasped stiffly. It was a dirty canvas puttee, stiff with blood. A ragged hole went through from the inside seams. There was another hole opposite. The filling had been withdrawn by its owner, with the help of his mates. He had gone down to the dressing station just before we arrived. His right leg.

The wind puffed in from the jungle. Involuntarily we recoiled from the odor.

"The place is full of 'em," explained one of the outpost crew, "and they're plenty ripe; but if you try to go out to bury the dead uns the live uns still up in the trees 'll plug you, sure as hell's a deep hole. So you just let 'em cook like that."

Later that afternoon we crawled into one position overlooking a churned-up, foliage-tangled spot where our mortars, grenades, and machine guns had been blasting for two days previously. The enemy had attempted an escape to the beach, but had been caught fair and square. There were scores of them there. And they weren't fighting. Swarms of huge blue-bottle flies droned a continuous hymn of corruption.

"You know, Whit," I said, half choking with nausea, "maybe we can hold out against the live Japs in this war, but the dead ones will get us."

It was a prediction that was to have ominous import for us all. Gastrointestinal disorders eventually spread the length and breadth of the peninsula. There was little doubt as to the method of transmission: air raids—by swarms of buzzing messengers of filth from the putrefying corpses that no one dared bury.

Two days later when I made my report to General George I was able to reassure him about the morale of our Air Corps doughboys at the front. And I could tell him that, despite the poor rations, they were bearing up well and were a toughened lot. And I told him that it was not the casualties of battle that I feared, but disease from these unavoidable battlefield conditions.

Now we made our way back along the trail to the accompaniment of the same rise and fall in sound volume of the seemingly endless fight at Aglaloma Bay. We approached the point where we had had our skirmish with the sniper, and, so unexpectedly, the leaden reception by our own troops.

"Now we'll see," said the little Jewish trooper. "If you didn't get him, he'll be trying to take our helmets off when we cross this spot. Let's go."

I was unwilling to bank my helmet and what was in it on the alleged excellence of my marksmanship, and wasted no time getting across that cleared spot. There were no shots.

"Hum-m-m," grunted the little trooper. "Maybe you did." And

to test his theory further, he boldly exposed himself. Still no shots. And now from where I stood, I could see that barrellike stick, or sticklike barrel—which?—hanging down among the leaves in the same position I'd observed after our slug-trading contest. I didn't ask Whit; in fact, I don't think he really knew about the little game I'd been playing.

We moved farther down the trail. It was chow time. Reliefs were crawling forward to the machine-gun nests with mess kits of salmon and hot coffee.

A distant chatter of a lone machine gun suddenly expanded into a wild chorus that raced swiftly along the length of the point.

"Airplanes—duck!"

In an instant the trail was abandoned. Gunners shoved aside their mess kits and leaped to their waiting weapons. Quickly they were swiveled to cover an arc of the sky. With grim, tired-eyed faces they sighted along the barrels, and their fingers tightened on the triggers. The guns jerked and barked like frantic dogs.

A swift shadow darted instantaneously across us and was gone. There was a momentary roar of a wide-throttled engine.

Then immediately a different kind of roar. This time, higher, thinner, and more continuous, like the whine of an angry hornet.

The firing along the peninsula slackened into nothingness.

"Forties!" screamed a voice.

"Our airplanes!"

"My God! Ain't that the best damn' sight you ever saw in your life?"

"Forties. . . . Our Forties! Look at 'em."

The machine gunner beside us leaped to his feet. His arms waved wildly. He danced a crazy jig on the tangled jungle floor. I stared at him. Tears were streaking muddy tracks down his wild-eyed face.

Something seemed to go dry inside me. Nothing I could have seen, heard, or read about, possibly could have told the story more dramatically and undeniably than this—the story of the strain never complained about, the story of the hope that no one dared utter, the story of the heartbreaking yearning for reinforcements and relief that these who fought on the front experienced every

moment of their existence. Merely the sight and sound of two of our battered old P-40's hawking a Japanese 97 to its death over the front had converted these exhausted, tired, dirty troops into yelling maniacs whose wild outburst was sheer, fanatical patriotism.

I felt suddenly sick. How little it would require to convert this grim determination of resistance into a forward-sweeping drive that five times the enemy strength we now had before us could never stop! How little it would take! Would they get it to us? Would they somehow drive through the hostile ocean waste from the east or jam it up from Australia some way? Surely, they would. . . . Surely, they would!

On our return from the front, the road for Roulston and me carried us past the Mariveles Cemetery No. 3 where they'd buried Lieutenant Anderson. On the opposite side of the road was a general hospital. But the cemetery was doing the business today. A line of ambulances was drawn up, silent, waiting. From their open rear doors protruded stiff, naked feet, toes down. . . . All the color of old slate.

*Friday January 30th*

Outside, the blackness of the jungle crowds about, still and hot. But within us there is a cold bleakness. We won't forget this day.

Woolery and Hall are gone. Oh, you may say, that's bad! . . . But after all it's only two pilots, and you do have many more. Yes, we have more. But again, these lads are among our most experienced, and then, too, we'd have to point out that two airplanes means exactly one-fourth of our remaining Air Force. Yes, one-fourth!

We don't know what happened. Three of our 40's had been dispatched on a mission over Mindoro. It was a wild-goose chase, and one came back directly. But the hours passed without word from Woolery and Hall.

Then we heard. It happened over the Second Corps front. Both

40's went into combat. But at the first discharge of a gun from their wings, first one, then the other airplane exploded violently in mid-air.

We heard later that they had landed at San José in Mindoro. Then, being well fueled and armed with bombs and unused ammunition, gained good altitude and flew straight past the lower end of Bataan Peninsula on to the front lines, no doubt to release their bombs and strafe or fight as opportunity offered. The Japanese were aloft there. I don't know whether they were Zeros or 97's. Ground observers saw them roaring for the attack—and that was all. Except for the explosion.

We are depressed and mystified.

The evening newscast from KGEI could not conceal the disasters that were multiplying against us on all the world fronts. The British speak of a loss of a first-class battleship; they also announce that Benghazi has been captured by the enemy again. Singapore is preparing the population for the loss of all of Johore and the retreat to the island itself. The Macassar battle, costly as it was for the Japanese, did not stop them, and they are in Borneo, in force.

That is enough for one day. It is eight o'clock. I am going to bed.

### *Saturday January 31st*

Called to the Advanced Command Post again today to bring information an agent had revealed to me. Possibly we have the answer to the Woolery and Hall mystery. The agent told me Sakdalistas were numerous on Mindoro and unquestionably some had access to San José field. Now we recall that on another occasion when fighters stopped at this field, then landed at Bataan Field, the muzzles of two guns were found mysteriously packed with caking mud. Fortunately, in this case, the pilot had not been obliged to fire his guns. Otherwise, an explosion of the plugged barrel might easily have ripped the wing wide open.

We have dispatched some Filipino agents to San José. They will give short shrift to Sakdalistas, once they discern them.

### *Corregidor Call*

I am going to the Rock tonight. Final telephone call to Bataan Field indicated that the General had not changed his mind. He preferred that I should go over and look into several matters as he had planned yesterday.

From the depths of my musette bag I have retrieved one spanking brand-clean uniform; that is, slacks and shirt, all pressed up to the king's taste, just as Esperanza gave them to me to pack in those last frantic moments at Fort McKinley.

I strap on my web belt with its sidearms and, with my ever-ready musette bag flung over one shoulder, make my way down the darkening trail to the motor pool near the Bamboo Gate at the edge of the bodega area above Little Baguio.

Clothes make the man—fussy! Here I've been living in any kind of condition and glad only to be alive. But now, because I have a freshly starched uniform to cover me, I already am irritated that the ever present traffic on the greatly burdened road through the jungle heaps dust against us as we make our way toward Cabcaben barrio and the long stone pier where the courier boat will tie up.

The courier boat is late on her trip from Corregidor. To the right, a powerful Navy tug hoists a single signal light to its cross arms. There are two small steamers farther out, well spaced to avoid presenting too easy a target to dive bombers.

Dive bombers! For a moment I am confused. Is it the thought in my mind, or did somebody cry out the word?

No, it is the real thing.

They have been flying low and, with characteristic suddenness, they zoom in upon us.

For a moment all is confusion as civilians and military alike remove themselves from exposed points with the least possible delay. Gunners spring into their pits and wheel their weapons around for quick shots.

But there are no shots. As quickly as they came, the six Japanese type 97's streak out across the bay toward Manila.

What does this mean? The answer is almost immediate.

Comes the high hornetlike whine of P-40's. They've taken off from Bataan Field. Actually the 40's are engaged upon a supply-dropping mission to the north; but the 97's do not like P-40's, especially at this time of evening. Soon the sounds of the motors have died away.

There is a new sound—the soft purring of the *McConnell*. My heart seems to pick up a beat as I recognize her despite an awning that is blackened with soot and weather, and paint that is non-existent in some parts. This is the same craft that circled the towering bulk of the U.S.A.T. *Washington* and brought the Manila boarding party to us that hot peaceful morning in May, almost ten months ago.

There is a considerable delay while iced beef carcasses are slid out for delivery on the peninsula. Just my luck! A ration of meat for tomorrow, and I shan't be there to get mine. Haven't had any for nine days. I am quite sorry for myself. But my sudden despondency is shattered by a cheery feminine hail.

A woman's voice! And it is calling my name! Why . . . I haven't even seen a woman since we left Manila. But is this a woman that approaches me in the dusk? At least "she" does not appear that way. But it is. . . . Annalee Jacoby, and back of her is Mel.

"We were just coming over to visit you all," says Annalee enthusiastically. She is dressed in slacks and blouse. Her "uniform" she informs me. Hasn't had a dress since Manila.

"No use trying to visit him," smiles Mel. "He's all slicked up, and that means—Corregidor."

"Boy, has my luck run out!" I moan. "First I miss my ration of meat, and then I miss you—and, believe me or not, Annalee, I am going to miss you most."

They are coming over to Bataan to make pictures for *Life* magazine.

It's time to shove off now, but still we are delayed. A wounded officer is being helped aboard. As we glide across North Channel, I catch his profile against the rising moon. Something clicks in my

memory. I have seen that profile before—in the headquarters building of Fort Wayne, Michigan, within the city of Detroit. I served a brief tour with him as his Intelligence Officer in the summer of 1940.

I am right, it is Lieutenant Colonel Donovan Swanton of the regular army infantry.

"Stopped a splinter up on the Second Corps front," explains Colonel Swanton, "but they seem to think I should rest a little over on Corregidor. I am willing for a while."

He has seen heavy fighting almost from the first, and he did not stop even after the splinter had wrecked his foot. For a good half the distance, we swap reminiscences. Then he is joined by another officer, and I discover that I am being observed by someone who recognizes my profile. It is a civilian named Mallens, a representative of International Business Machines who was in Manila to help establish the Machine Records Section at Fort Santiago. He is engaged in the same sort of task at Corregidor. He tells me that the casualties among white officers have been remarkably light so far. Filipino casualties have been fairly heavy. We have between twelve and fifteen thousand American and Filipino Scout troops on Bataan, that's all. The total number under arms will run round about ninety thousand, he says, and we are feeding many thousands more—refugees that have poured into the peninsula before the Japanese advance. Food is becoming the major problem despite the fact that the Quartermaster is operating several rice mills and slaughterhouses.

We dock at the bomb-ruined wharf, a stark, smashed memento of December 29 and subsequent raids. Lou Bell's long form comes through the night to meet me, and his car whisks us up the steep winding road to Topside.

Almost up! Just past the halfway mark the driver pulls up suddenly and leaps from the car. The air-raid sirens are screaming, and the white shafts of searchlights pencil the sky.

"Oh, well," observes Lou philosophically. "We can walk."

And walk we do. The raid doesn't develop. I suspect the alarm was caused by another of those 97's marauding about.

Lou is established in a house near the "Denver" battery. The

damage from bombing has not been so great at this end of Topside. Farther to the east is Kindley Field. And then the main island tapers off to a narrow tail and drops into the sea. It is up at the "head" end, the bulbous portion of the island, that the damage has been so extensive. We shall see that tomorrow.

In this house life goes on in snatches. Army cots are pushed here and there in a manner that bespeaks typical masculine casualness; one parallels a littered desk, another is cozily ensconced between an overburdened bookcase and a table almost hidden under its load of miscellaneous military equipment. The artillery officers have had their evening meal; but I am desperately hungry, and from some place Lou produces a can of soup and half a loaf of excellent bread. There are tinned pears, too. And do we banquet! We laughingly compare waist lines. Lou doesn't fill his slacks by several inches. I'm a very close second. We literally lick our plates.

We go out into the warm tropical night, softened here by the steady, cool breeze from the east. Lying under the spatter of stars, dimmer only in the region of the climbing moon, we stare across North Channel to Bataan and fight the war all over again. It is incredible, but on that constricted rugged thumb of land is encompassed practically the whole of power in the Far East. Three glowing white flashes leap heavenward far away at the north of the peninsula. Many seconds later come the echoes of the triple thunder. If it weren't for the superb work of those 155-millimeter guns hidden in the jungles and even among the rising crags of Mount Samat, this last stand of Americans already would have been driven into the North Channel below us. The flashes on the front grow more continuous, and the air pumps irritably to the dull explosions. But now comes a new entr'acte music.

"I hear P-40's," says Lou.

"Yeh; probably returning from that supply job I saw them depart for early this evening."

"No, they're coming."

Even as he speaks, the air-raid siren rises in sudden alarm. Again the white arcking of the searchlights. But almost immediately the sirens announce all clear, although the P-40 engines are more distinct than ever now.

"Somethin' going on," mutters Lou. "Look, they're shooting down North Channel toward Mariveles."

The 40's have switched on their running lights and, like multiple falling stars gone horizontal, are tracing their course swiftly westward. Quickly they are lost to view. The searchlights go out.

"I wonder what's up?" I say uneasily. "Mariveles looks quiet, but we can't see beyond Cochinos Point. Do you suppose—"

"Yes, I do," interrupts Lou. "There is something going on on the west coast tonight, I'll bet. And General George smells a rat."

Certainly something is going on. Again we can hear P-40 engines, but this time more faintly, and our eyes fail to discern running lights. They must be crossing over the land.

We strain our ears. But the muttering of the guns on the Second Corps front masks any sound from the west coast. We shall not know until morning of the desperate struggle going on there, for even as we study and puzzle, the enemy is making his second most determined bid to effect landings along these sensitive points far beyond our range of vision. If he succeeds, the vital Bagac road will be severed and all our positions on Bataan Peninsula will be flanked.

Several days later I shall hear how those dirt-caked half-starved Air Corps troops on Aglaloma Point, their will to resist drained out of them by weeks of malnutrition and unrelieved days and nights of sleepless vigilance, almost collapsed from sheer nervous exhaustion at the sudden appearance of scores of landing barges loaded to capacity with finely conditioned, heavily armed, hate-filled Japanese storm troopers; how some of these fatigue-beaten boys groveled in their fox holes and wept in weakness and helplessness; how some of their comrades, with slightly greater physical stamina, pleaded with them to rise up and serve their weapons as long as they could fire them; how all seemed lost to some of those very boys—it was the end of all human endurance—when suddenly . . .

The first of the P-40's swept down off the treetops, and from each shape dropped six shattering fragmentation bombs that landed fair and square among the advancing barges. Even above the crashing of weapons came the screams of Japanese—the in-

vincible Japanese who could not be killed like ordinary men. . . . They could be killed! They were dying. In the dancing flames of exploding bombs, they could be seen dying. Our people could see them blown to bits. Then the 40's whipped around, and from every gun red tracers bit into the struggling masses in the water and drilled savagely into barges yet unhurt. A ragged cheer rose from scores of fox holes and emplacements on the point. The black mass of land broke into myriad winking lights—savage, snapping little lights from which long streaming orange tracers cut into the bay.

Time after time, the remnants of our Air Force droned back to Bataan and Cabcaben Field, where General George personally assumed command. But so well had the boys rehearsed for this hour that no extra commands were necessary. Time after time, they loaded up with bombs and full machine belts and roared off for the attack.

But these P-40's were not the only agents of destruction operating against the enemy that night. Strategically placed artillery units fired on point-blank, flat trajectory and blew enemy barges clean out of the water. Two terrific explosions well off the shore jarred the entire area. The Navy shore patrol had joined the melee. And, as on that former assault on January 18, the concentration of the enemy was split. One battered component landed between the Anyasan and the Silian rivers north of Aglaloma. A second element drifted south and found holdings on Longaskawayan.

All night this bitter action rages. On Corregidor, though, our only indication of it is the high-pitched whine of the bloodthirsty P-40's.

We are up early the next morning and make our way along the now repaired and well maintained road to the mouth of Malinta Tunnel. No cars are permitted in the proximity of the tunnel, and everywhere we see troops falling into line for their morning chow. To the left of the tunnel mouth, protected with cable traps from the possibility of a fanatical enemy flier diving his craft straight into the vital heart of Malinta Hill, there is a roofed-over space

under which rough board tables are engaged by USAFFE personnel, whose faces are familiar to me. There is round-faced, gray-haired Colonel Seals (no, not Colonel—Brigadier General now), and beside him his sweet-faced wife who, owing to her physical incapacity and the fact that she has no living relatives, has been permitted to remain with her husband after the general evacuation order. Mrs. MacArthur, chic in white skirt and blue jacket, the large-eyed Arthur, and the ever watchful Ah Cheu (the Chinese amah), are sitting in the shade. We chat until General MacArthur and General Sutherland emerge from the tunnel to have breakfast.

Later that day in the administration tunnel, General MacArthur ceases his endless pacing—five steps, turn, five steps, turn—across the width of the electric-lighted bore, to receive my report from General George and to charge me with his personal congratulations for outstanding leadership to the little bearded man in the heart of the Bataan jungle.

To General Sutherland I give General George's despairing appeal for more airplanes. For answer General Sutherland extracts a bulky file of radiograms.

"Just in case you have some idea that we are not trying," he says in his characteristic, clipped phrases, "look at this—and this—and this!"

My heart sinks with each new tissue thumbed over before my eyes. Appeal after appeal has gone forward; but a war-engulfed world is powerless even to approach satisfying the endless, frantic demands from Polar Circle to Equator, from Greenwich time line all the way round to Greenwich time line again. Even if ten thousand airplanes were ready on West Coast airfields this minute, how could they be gotten to us over thousands of miles of hostile oceans? General MacArthur has left no possibility unexploited. We do not know, nor does the American public know yet, that the Japanese blow at Pearl Harbor sealed our fate on Bataan. The demands on our Navy in the Atlantic, and the presence of the Japanese fleet in the Pacific, after that crippling attack, have combined to establish a blockade that only our supreme commanders know cannot be penetrated.

"But you can tell him this," continues General Sutherland. "We

now have another plan in mind, and it may give us some assistance. We won't know for a little while yet."

"But what about Buzz Wagner and all the other P-40 pilots who were sent south to Australia for the purpose of ferrying P-40's back here?" I asked.

"Something has happened, and we cannot get explanatory answers to our radios. We have one here which says that there are no P-40's in Australia to be spared, as they are all needed for the defense of the N.E.I."

With heavy heart, I leave the artificially ventilated tunnel for the main Malinta Tunnel and accompany Lou, who is supervising a job of hiding spare aircraft engines at widely separated points for dispersal protection. Again I feel the threat of those "belligerent jitters" that so quickly and savagely assail one these days on Bataan and Corregidor. This is a destructive malady that plunges its victim into a slough of despond which can thicken into a physical illness. There is a savage determination to live—to live from day to day, to secure food, to secure rest, to get some kind of protection from the implacable doom that moves ever closer.

At least out in the bright sunlight, I have some strength to beat off this threatening attack. It must be beaten off, I know that. No one can assist. Always it is a case of pulling one's self up by mental bootstraps until some degree of equilibrium is established.

Strange. . . . I never have been one to swell inwardly at the sight of the flag. Somehow, always I have guarded against what I believe to be the dangers of mawkish patriotism; yet I believe it was the flag that pulled me out of it this day.

Lou has sensed something of my depression. He has reacted as do most of us who see the "black wolf" leap upon a mate. He says nothing, but simply suggests that we take a quick tour round the damaged areas. We do, and, seeing the rows upon rows of shattered buildings, I sense that the fighting half of the "belligerent jitters" is showing signs of ascendancy; then, as we round the curve and swing up on high Topside, the flag stands out in superb triumph above the wreckage below it.

My breath catches. The whole scene is blurred, and my vision is washed by unbidden, unashamed tears.

"Christ, Lou!" I mutter. "That's got it . . ."

And the next morning as the *McConnell* bumps its way across the choppy North Channel I find myself with binoculars thrust against my eyes searching for that tiny, triumphant blob of color above the ruins the enemy has brought about, and the men who move among them.

### Tuesday February 3rd

Took a carload of goods and chattels to the Advanced C.P. early this morning, dreading all the way the business of imparting to General George the discouraging aspects of my talk with General Sutherland. But anticipation was worse than realization. He was in an unbeatable mood. Waved off my gloomy outline and called instead for just plain "us" talk. Said he was "lonesome" for me, and then, just when I was beginning to stow some of my things, a call came through from "Palace" (field telephone name for Little Baguio), and I was back on the road again to spend the rest of the day and tonight at the old camp.

### Wednesday February 4th

Goodbye this camp. Little Erbig, General George's faithful orderly from Brooklyn, is coming up the path now and will chuck the rest of the gear into the car. What will happen before I again live here—or shall I ever live here again? I was here a month and two nights, and always I shall remember the jungle solitude early in the evening. But the nights were not so restful. Like last night. There was Brother Rat, three shooting sprees by alarmed sentries, messengers slogging through the woods, some kind of animal fight near by, and a monkey trying to steal my toothpaste. (Do they love toothpaste!?)

It has long been a grim joke at our breakfast chow table how Captain Jack Caldwell would like his eggs this morning, when, of course, we haven't seen such a delectable bit of hen produce since

we left Manila—that is, *they* haven't. But I have. At Advanced C.P. there is an old sergeant who served with General George in the last war and worships him. A friend of the General's is, *prima facie*, a friend of his. "Pop" had made him a present of two small eggs from one of the old King's small flock. In turn, the old sergeant gave them to me. I hard-boiled them and gave one to Jack—with instructions.

This morning at chow he said he would have his egg boiled and the next moment, before his speechless ogle-eyed messmates, from Colonel Churchill down to a first lieutenant visiting us, Captain Jack proceeded with great meticulousness to peel the unbelievable object of their stares and, with exaggerated nonchalance and mad-dening daintiness, ate it bit by bit. It was a sensation.

Later. I am installed in the bunkroom of the little headquarters shack. I can reach out and touch Lefty's bunk at right angles to mine. The General's is on the other side of the small room before the "front" door. I have pulled the mosquito net close about and am receiving an excellent musical program from Manila on the pee-wee radio beside me on the pillow. American tunes. Japanese woman announcer. Very smooth. . . .

### Thursday February 5th

Forgot to mention in that record yesterday that I had hardly more than set foot in my new home when a span of Japanese dive bombers came in and, with great deliberation, aimed for the anti-aircraft battery and banana patch just to the east of us. I was so interested trying to get pictures of them that I forgot to hie myself to the protected slit trenches. Immediately overhead they released their stick of bombs. I saw them coming down. I should have been scared, but concentration on something besides being scared is truly a great deterrent thereto. The drift carried them into the patch where the guns were slamming away in great hot-breathed belches. The strikes shook the earth. Hit two men and put three of our precious guns out of action.

The reason I thought of this is that they did it again—just now.

This time they hit the field. No serious damage. Got some pictures. I am afraid the boys will think I am trying to show off. I'm not, really, and if I am the only one "topside" during these raids it is because I am determined to get pictures.

The Japanese have hit Soerabaja. My concern is not for the Navy yard, for some silly reason, but for that beautiful stained-glass window in the Hotel Oranje. Singapore Island is under siege. God help them!

Later. What's this . . . ? A spot of good news! A Navy Task Force has smashed into the Gilbert Islands east of us, and we judge from the great agitation on Tokyo intercepts that the gobs must have busted them up good and proper. Glory be! . . . Glory be! . . .

Here it's *too* quiet. USAFFE thinks so too. The Rock has ordered extensive air reconnaissance. Already the boys have filled in the bomb craters on the field, and our old flytraps are off to cover as far as Lingayen in the northwest and Manila and Pampanga on the other sides.

### Friday February 6th

We're popular today. Six bombers and some fighters paid us a matutinal visit. If there were any bananas left in that patch, there ain't now, brother, there ain't now! They didn't get any more of our guns though; in fact, two of those previously knocked out were barking again today.

This afternoon, they did it again. Churned up the field. Didn't get any 40's. There is a big fire burning up near Labao. Can't find out what it is. The lines are all out to Oakland—which is the Second Corps C.P.

Tonight we were to transfer half our remaining 40's to Cabcaben Field, which is just finished. The specter of bad luck haunts us. Lieutenant Baker crashed by overshooting. He was burned, but he'll live; plane washed out and burned.

Another 40 gone.

*Saturday February 7th*

It's getting to be an old story. They thumped us today. But went on to Labao again. They're hunting for something up there.

Later. They've found it! Dirty work at the crossroads. They had been informed of a hidden ammunition dump up there. Direct hits. The stuff has been going off for the past three hours. Communications are out again.

The General was up on Second Corps front today. Had himself a time.

*Sunday February 8th*

Sunday again!

And we knew it—announced as it was by the shrilling of the telephone bells shortly after midnight. We were alerted by Colonel Gregg calling from Operations at Little Baguio. The west-coast watchers along the China Sea were uneasy. The First Corps was, too. Looked like an attempted landing. Forties were dispatched at 3:25. But one with Lieutenant White at the controls struck the rough and cracked up. He's not much hurt. But . . .

Another 40 gone.

This is the most heartbreaking phase of the whole thing: the accidents by which, one by one, we deprive ourselves of these last remaining fighters. But the military airfield has not yet been recorded in history which does not have these "normal" flying accidents. I recall one day when we cracked up four individually during the early morning hours at Selfridge Field. A record like that here, and we'd have but two P-40's left.

The landings failed to materialize, although at dawn all communications were washed out for some reason. I am determined to put agents on this entire area; these communication failures at critical times—the same specter that haunted us with such disastrous effect from the very first day of this war—are not, and never have been, mere coincidences. I was relieved at 7:15 A.M.

World news increasingly disheartening: Samarinda gone; Soerabaja bombed again; two Dutch and at least one American cruiser sunk. The *Houston*? No air help possible now except by carrier—and the war is just two calendar months old today.

### “Bataania”

For some men, mental concentration is encompassed within the glowing bowl of a pipe and given freedom in the lazy lace of drifting smoke. For others it may be staring with unseeing eyes into the blue vaulted heaven. A third may stride.

General George utilized all three—but none in more than a minor role. His main device combined mental processes with the activity of his small, but perfectly proportioned hands. His fingers were long, yet muscular and practical.

Tirelessly, hour after hour, he carved.

All his life he had followed this hobby, and some of his tiny figurines had attracted widespread comment. He was more than a simple wood carver: he was a sculptor in wood. Untrained in gross anatomy, he taught himself accuracy from close observation and the simple study his own muscle attachments. His figures were anatomically correct.

But figures and the more artistic designs were not the limit of his capabilities. Wherever we established a headquarters for more than a few days at a time, the General would set himself quietly and without announcement to providing numerous little necessities, all with his ready knife whose blades he maintained in a state of brilliant keenness. These articles ranged from perfectly fitted scabbards for carrying jungle blades, to self-draining soap trays fashioned from bamboo; ingenious, adjustable flashlight holders collapsed into small space when not in use; and a thoroughly artistic blackout shade was contrived from a cigar box and bamboo stripings.

We learned not to interrupt him when he was carving. Each of the slow deliberate movements of his fingers fitted in with his mental tempo, invariably highly productive. None of the objects

had much inherent significance; they simply were carvings.

But as "Susie" began to assume shape from the rough block of wood and the necessity for finer detailed work arrived, we scoured the field dental units for instruments, which had passed their maximum usefulness, in order to provide General George with minute carving surfaces. The field hospitals likewise contributed small scalpels which had corroded in the moist atmosphere. A probe from my own surgical kit was filed down to give him an extremely small gouge with a needlelike cutting edge.

Alas for "Susie," this figurine which took shape under our eyes in the long Bataan days was imbued with far too much character. Just what she signified, we were not sure. It was something intangible, yet charged with the lights and shadows of our daily existence on the Peninsula. She was a barometer. Through her we were able to interpret exactly the General's internal feelings: Quick, sharp gouges with one of the improvised chisels meant trouble for someone—us or Tojo. When the General was pleased he would smile beneath his beard and, in unspeaking thoughtfulness, gently massage the figure's posterior quarters.

Hours and hours of planning accompanied his patient work upon the model. Every event of any importance involving the Fifth Interceptor Command on Bataan had its origin in that tiny brown figure—the reorganization of the personnel, the establishment of the detection and interceptor center, the Nielson and Nichols Field raids that were so disastrous for the Japanese, the terrific onslaught on Subic Bay . . . Our lives on Bataan were recorded in that carving. Bataan . . . Bataan . . .

"Her name," said the General solemnly one day, "is 'Bataania.' "

And so, henceforth, she was.

Her fame spread rapidly, and numerous were the callers whose official visits terminated with a request to see Bataania. One of these was General Casey. He admired her for many minutes, turning her over and over in his hands and noting the exquisite precision of her form. Presently he uttered a long sigh and, addressing no one of us brother hermits in particular, said with great feeling:

"My God, Hal! . . . What a memory!"

This quickly went down as one of the classic remarks of Bataan.

Bataania, although never quite completed, was destined to ride one of the crashing Bulkley PT boats in the dash from Corregidor, then by Fortress to Australia—and finally by sea to America.

*Teams: Six against six; score: 6 to 1*

"Unless you are in a hurry to get back to your headquarters, General, you might stay here, because I have a hunch there is going to be some fireworks."

General George was speaking to General Richard Marshall, Deputy Chief of Staff and Commanding Officer of the Forward Echelon of USAFFE, on Bataan. This capable officer, high in the esteem of both General MacArthur and General Sutherland, had come to the advance Air Headquarters to consult with General George on a number of important matters, and, incidentally, to pay his respects to "Bataania."

In the adjoining wireless room my attention was riveted on the loud-speaker, with one ear flattened against a telephone receiver. It seemed insufferably hot in the little shack, and my hands were damp, but partly with anxiety. General George's prophecy might prove all too correct. And soon.

He explained to General Marshall. "In order to correct their shooting, the artillery on the Rock has asked for air photographs of the Ternate region, southwest of Cavite," he said, indicating a spot directly across from Corregidor on the map that was nailed to the thin partition back of his table-desk. "As you know, the enemy batteries concealed around Ternate have been causing a good bit of discomfort and occasionally some damage and casualties on Corregidor. Retaliation has been only partially successful owing to the effective concealment of the enemy units across South Channel. The intermittent shelling is detrimental to morale, if nothing else."

For the twentieth time I adjusted the main tuning condenser on the receiver. But still there was no indication of life from the six P-40's in the air at the moment—and which had been in the air

for all too many moments to suit anyone's comfort. General George went on explaining:

"You can't operate an aerial camera from a P-40. The only thing we could do was to ask our stout friend Captain J. A. Vil-lamor to climb into one of those Philippine Army training planes and make the snaps from it. Of course, he's just plain cold meat for any Jap in the air, and it would be all up with him in a moment if Zeros came in. He hasn't as much as one hundred miles an hour speed, and only a few thousand feet of altitude—no armament, of course. So we've sent out practically our whole air force to protect him. Six are with him, riding in pairs at different altitudes. . . . They ought to be coming in now."

The General came to the doorway and looked in. "No word yet?"

"Nothing yet, sir, but they've had ample time—and our luck is just too good. 'Photo Joe' or someone just like him has been in the southwest sector, and his radio has been active. He must have seen them, and maybe he is reporting them. But—"

At that instant Captain Lunde's voice broke in harshly through the loud speaker.

"9 M N to Leo—9 M N to Leo!" he called in quick, sharp words that sent an electric tingle skidding along the whole length of me. Then, without waiting for an acknowledgment from the quarters in the air—as per agreement, since we did not want them betraying their position by transmissions—he spoke again rapidly but distinctly: "Enemy pursuit taking off from hostile field. . . . Six enemy pursuit coming in your direction. Take care—take care."

As the blare from the speaker ceased, the thrumming of airplane engines pulsed through the afternoon air.

Now this would be a race!

Our people were coming home. They had to escort the lame duck to safety. But six enemy fighters were streaking it to join battle.

General George and General Marshall quickly quitted the headquarters shack, and as they went I heard the Deputy Chief of Staff question him anxiously, "What will they do?" He had grasped the situation immediately and knew as well as we what a tight spot

was developing for our people with every passing second. We stood an excellent chance of losing almost all of our remaining Air Force then and there. General George's reply constituted, I believe, one of the finest tributes to the mutual trust and esteem existing between commander and subordinates yet to be phrased during the heat of battle. Without a second's hesitation he replied in a firm but matter-of-fact voice:

"They'll bring him in, of course."

I saw the flash of admiration in General Marshall's quick glance.

"But that means they must lose all their fighting altitude to cover his landing."

"Exactly, sir. It means they *have* lost their altitude. He's landing now—and—*there are the Zeros!*"

We were rooted where we stood. The General's sharp announcement sounded like the crack of doom. Over the treetops to the east we saw, one after another, our P-40's winging in low with throttled engines. Yet, even as those pilots deliberately and magnificently threw away all possible fighting altitude to protect the defenseless Villamor, six swift shapes knifed down from above. The blurred exhausts of their engines crescendoed into a high scream. The flat rattle of guns broke upon the hot air. It seemed as though those shots were finding targets within our own bodies. I was aware that one of our grounded pilots near by was shaking his fists wildly and shouting curses from the depths of his helplessness. I stared at General George. His face was completely immobile. Only the dark intensity of his eyes betrayed the tremendous strain that gripped him.

The awful moment was broken by a raucous blare from the loud-speaker. I recognized the voice of Pilot Ben Brown, the flight leader.

"Re-form on me!" he shouted. "Re-form on me!"

"The Japs have overshot them!" cried General George. "The enemy simply couldn't imagine anybody being that foolish. He thought there must be a trick, and he's just plain overshot them. . . . Now give it to 'em, kids!"

The fate of our Air Force depended upon those next few seconds. The terrific velocity of the attacking fighters had carried

them far beyond Bataan Field, and as they rose in great arcs they were forced to do a slower wing-over with the result that our 40's, roaring under every inch of manifold pressure that could be brought into effect, zoomed out over the bay and fought for equivalent altitude.

Again the enemy cut into them, but this time Brown and his companions had maneuver room. And they used it. Individual dog fights developed on every hand. The roaring of motors was staccatoed by the chattering of guns as long and short bursts were exchanged at every opportunity.

Suddenly from the east came the sound of wide-open engines. We had an instantaneous glance of "Photo Joe"—a silver bi-engined craft—streaking like a comet for cloud cover, a P-40 hard on his tail. At that critical moment "Photo Joe" provided us with the laugh of the day when he announced with great haste on his radio that he was in the midst of an air battle with P-40's surrounding him, and that he intended to "evacuate at once"!

"Evacuate," he did. But he was the only Japanese machine to escape us that day.

Four were shot out of the sky in as many minutes. A fifth broke off the fight and endeavored to follow "Photo Joe" to the north. But with every hundred yards he was losing altitude. Smoke streamed from his engine. We cheered him until he dropped below the distant tree line. We knew he was a "gone goose." Our only concern was whether he would reach his own lines before crashing. We learned later he made an emergency landing on Pilar Field, which was in no man's land. Gunners of a field battery saw this son of the Rising Sun setting down almost in front of them. Furiously they yanked one field gun around to cover the field. They were urged on by somewhat profane, play-by-play announcement of one who kept the Japanese pilot under observation while that worthy frantically endeavored to effect simple repairs and take off again. He made some quick adjustment and actually was back in the cockpit. But at that instant the seventy-five spoke with a flame-centered roar and sent a shell screaming at flat trajectory. The enemy pilot took off all right—but this time to join his ancestors.

Mariveles reported a dog fight. But there was something wrong . . .

A P-40, streaking in pursuit of a Zero, had lost him in a cloud. The American then had searched at reduced speed, swinging in low beneath the cloud—a dangerous move, for the wily enemy might have been waiting within that cloud for just that. Watchers below held their breath while the P-40 made its disadvantageous circuit. But nothing happened. Then, to their amazement, the P-40 pilot repeated the maneuver as though endeavoring to entice his enemy to come out and fight.

He did. . . . Screaming out of the cloud from superior altitude, he cut in on the P-40's tail with red streaming tracers. Together they zoomed into the cloud-obscured fastness of Mariveles mountain.

With a suddenness that left the excited watchers paralyzed, all sounds of straining motors ceased.

Days later a laboring expedition painfully made its way through the most difficult country on the peninsula, and found part of the answer. Wriggling out on the branch of a tree that was rooted in the rocky forehead of a deep gulch, they saw, scattered over hundreds of feet of the jungle below, remnants of a Japanese Zero. Closer inspection after a dangerous descent into the gulch proved that the pilot was dead; but they were unable to reach him to bury him. Even the individual cylinders from the radial engine, a perfect copy of the Wright Whirlwind, were scattered in fractured bits along the jungle floor. The wildness of the country prevented further search. Captain Whitfield, the party leader, was certain that in the next gulch lay the likewise shattered remains of the P-40 and the Ace Pilot of Bataan Field, Lieutenant Earl R. Stone, Jr., officially credited with three Japanese planes.

That night the "Voice of Freedom" announced our score: Six Japanese Zeros attacked. Six Japanese Zeros destroyed. One P-40 and pilot missing.

*Tuesday February 10th*

So the end of another day. . . . That observation, by its own obviousness and triteness, illustrates well the mental soporiferousness deriving inflexibly from our day-by-day existence.

The enemy was much puzzled by our display of air vigor yesterday. He's been photographing us today. He'll blast us tomorrow.

Tonight the boys brought in Lieutenant Stone's things, put them on the table, and went out. The General stared at the things, unspeaking, for several minutes. Then took off his glasses and dropped his head upon his arm on the table.

"I am getting twitched," he muttered.

He wept silently, for just a few terrible moments.

*Wednesday February 11th*

Soerabaja savagely bombed; Batavia bombed and machine gunned; Singapore all but smashed. Good God! The point is that the world is reeling at such a pace now that it makes precious little difference whether *we* get help.

We've just learned that Americans have landed in New Zealand. Is there any other place in the world which can hold Americans? If there is, we'll find a way to get them there. I suppose that's sour grapes, really. But when you "sweat out" that phantom relief convoy day after day . . .

*Thursday February 12th*

We've just had word that the causeway between Johore and Singapore Island was imperfectly demolished, and that the Japanese are pouring across. There must have been a reason for that; but it is not apparent, and our spirits have plunged. Man by man, the boys broke away from the radio receiver and drifted into the jungle to sit in solemn silence, each with his own bitter thoughts.

But there is always some compensation, and we had ours: meat tonight for the first time in sixteen days. And I in a rage at my own helplessness; my stomach is so contracted on half-rations—and not too much of those—that it cannot accommodate itself to a decent meal and promptly feels full, while my eyes bulge at this display of cornucopian plenty: two pieces of meat still on my plate.

We had our party tonight. Five nurses came up from the Base Hospital, including the tall blonde called Kay who took care of General Claggett. We wound up singing songs to the accompaniment of the Chaplain's portable organ played by a lanky sergeant who proved himself a true genius at the keyboard.

Women in our shack! Women on Bataan at all! Suddenly I was conscious of a subtle change in the atmosphere. What was it? Then I knew. . . . A return of those little artificialities, those intangible subtleties by which one man strives to exceed another for the winning of attentions—a resumption of the underflow of defensive competitions, the tiny clamor of endless strivings in the ever pitched battle of the sexes and between the sexes.

These things I sensed, and knew how deeply, then, there had been a certain peace in the heart of war. . . .

### *Friday February 13th*

Yes, Friday the 13th, but maybe we, in our own little tight circle, should call it lucky, for we still have Lefty, although today marks the closest escape he has had so far in this war.

Lucky for us. . . . But misery stalks the land tonight. Enemy dive bombers struck just beyond the trees to the south of us, hitting the barrio of Cabcaben and the refugee camps just beyond. High explosive and phosphorus bombs. The barrio went up in a wall of flame. Forty-eight civilians are known dead and more than a hundred hideously burned or hurt.

Lefty was just coming around the sharp curve south of the barrio when they came over low. He leaped from his car and flattened himself against the bank of the cutting at the curve. The stick of bombs whistling down, unquestionably aimed for the

traffic trapped at this curve, struck a few yards to the west of the protecting bank. Debris, dust and fragments flew among them, but Lefty was not touched by anything too solid or fast.

### Saturday February 14th

Captain Whitfield has returned from the search for Lieutenant Stone. A terrific trip! His features are gaunt and drawn. He brought with him what appears to be a section of the stabilizer of the wrecked Zero. And what a morale builder that is proving to be! For now we see the vaunted Zero in its true proportion. Like stripping impressive, padded clothes from a man and baring a surprisingly skinny, undeveloped body. This stabilizer reveals the stick-tape-and-glue construction of World War I days. No wonder Zeros disintegrate upon a fair hit of a short burst. The riddle of their fast climb and maneuverability is a riddle no longer. They have no weight. The Zero is really nothing but a flying engine with machine guns. A 40 is slow, heavy, and cumbersome in comparison. But it can absorb a pounding. One punch landed fair on this kite, and it is finished.

### Sunday February 15th

Sunday again. . . . And here it comes. . . . The air shudders on three sides to the insistent hammering of bombs and huge guns. The Cavite shore is now hostile to us. Hidden Japanese artillery emplacements opened on Corregidor at two o'clock this afternoon. Hit Topside and Middleside with casualties. The great, squat-bellied mortars on the island are replying. On the north front, artillery has been bellowing. On the west, bombs are thundering.

The month is more than half gone.

Still no word of any help.

The rice was moldy today. Pretty hungry. But couldn't keep it down.

*Monday February 16th*

Distressed by the obvious signs of physical deterioration among our people, General George decided upon a program of two hours of light physical work or calisthenics of a type and degree to be decided by unit commanders on a basis of what they considered the men under them could accept with true benefit, considering state of rations, camp fevers, etc. He'd consulted with lanky Doc Rowel first.

Frankly, I don't believe they can take much. There are many indications of accumulative malnutrition. In the mornings before chow, one's legs feel watery and, at intervals, pump with pains that swell and go away again. If you move too rapidly, there is a hint of vertigo. The heart thumps like a tractor engine bogged in a swamp. These not-too-serious discomforts disappear immediately upon eating. For perhaps an hour one feels quite normal. Then lassitude. Between noontime and one o'clock is the worst for me. Seems though I cannot sit straight, but must hump over. I've learned to save out at least one piece of the sour toast from breakfast and stow it away from the ants against that gnawing physical depression between noon and one. It's not so bad right now. Lieutenant Obert came back from the southern islands the other night. He brought with him some fine slabs of chocolate. Also some whisky. Gifts for General George. But the General at once spread the precious chocolate out on the table and invited the squadron to have a good, big piece each. Then he put the rest away in my wireless shack in the lean-to, stating that this was "public property" to be partaken of by all present until it was gone. I pleaded with him to put aside a good piece for himself. His ribs are showing; every one. His arms are startlingly thin now, only the bone and tough muscle. But he said: "Don't worry. I'll get my share." You bet he will; Lefty and I have hidden some just the same. Heaven help the rest of us if he goes bad on us.

It's just come in. . . .

Singapore has fallen. Surrendered Sunday night February 15.

There are few words spoken here. Men seem dazed. The great

Singapore. . . . Impregnable. Only in the minds of those who, like Sir Robert, *had* to believe it was so because he could get nothing else from a bitterly pressed home country to help buttress it. And before that, in the minds of those who would not see the truth—like the same kind in our own land.

They gave us the works today. Both Bataan Field and New Cabcaben Field. Didn't take them long to learn that we had planes at Cabcaben, did it? Well, I have new agents on the job now; shrewd little fellows who know their way around. The enemy also gave the antiaircraft locations a good going over. Still, I don't believe anything serious resulted. The lines are still out. But I've made a personal reconnaissance. Forced to accomplish some agile jack-rabbiting when they came back unexpectedly. Lucky I'd located the fox holes in the vicinity first. Good health rule, that.

Tonight enemy 105-millimeter batteries off the Second Corps front opened up. The shells are exploding much farther south than ever before. That last enemy advance crowded us. I can hear the guns individually and predict the shell explosions to the fraction of a second. They sound just over the ridge. Actually it's a good step farther away than that.

Reception exceptionally clear; heard Jack Benny's hour tonight—KGEI. The first since before this crazy, upside-down world became a real one. Finally shut it off. Does funny things.

*Tuesday February 17th*

What a day this has been! Bombs for breakfast. Bombs where lunch should have been—but hasn't since December 25. Bombs for afternoon tea. And bombs for "dinner." Sounds noisy and cuisinish. Actually far more of the former than the latter. Four separate bombings today. Both fields. All lines out again. But don't think there's been much real damage, although saw Doc Rowel high-tailing it toward Cabcaben. . . . Yes, there're some casualties down there. Just heard.

The Rock's been plastering Ternate and Cavite all day. Lobbing twelve-inch mortar shells.

Lieutenant Charles Sneed, former squadron leader here, will serve as an assistant to me, stationed at the base camp at Little Baguio. Charlie needs a change. He's been at it since the first little bunch of P-40's flew straight into Japanese formations of as many as fifty-four bombers escorted by fighters. He's seen his classmates disappear one by one and sometimes two by two. A lot of it wasn't nice. None of it pleasant. He's on the verge of being "twitched." For squadron leader the General's put in tall, fair, fine-looking, and brainy Captain William "Ed" Dyess. Southerner. But married into newspaper folk up Champaign-Urbana way. Grand chap, really. His mates worship him.

Peered out of the window in the General's office just then. And wondered if I were twitched. . . . No. . . . It's a fact! There is a piano out there, right at the edge of the jungle! An old, battle-scarred upright. Presided over by that same lanky lad of the organ. The absurdity of it! . . . Shell bursts and bombs are his metronome count. But on he plays, swinging from "Prelude in G" to "Wabash Blues" and on to the rippling lilt of "Nola." His versatility is exceeded only by the sincerity and thoroughness of treatment of the composition under his flying fingers. Yet not all his fingers. He has only nine. One was shot off.

I give up.

Later. I am depressed. I can take the bombings. But shelling is worse. Something so insidious. . . . So methodical. . . .

*Wednesday February 18th*

Completely quiet except for a little shelling of the fortified islands.

Prediction: Within one week—during the coming phase of the moon—we will experience simultaneous attacks on both coasts, and at the same time an attempt will be made to neutralize Corregidor's artillery coverage. It's got to come.

We've solved their method of attack, and whipped them so far. They infiltrate on the north front every night: little parties that work their way around our strong points. Then, hiding back of

our front "line," they wait for a frontal attack by their pals. When this attack comes, it sounds like there is all the fire power of a regiment. In reality, we've learned that three-quarters of this noise is from firecrackers and drums. But it panics untrained troops. Then, at the critical moment, the infiltration parties in the rear cut loose with firecrackers, machine guns, and everything else they own. Our strong points immediately threaten to dissolve under the impression that they've been completely surrounded by a very heavy force. Only the stoutest fellows can take it. But they've learned. And they're plenty stout. They just sit tight and don't reveal their locations by firing uselessly. Instead of *their* being in a tight place, the enemy is in a hot spot. Actually *he* is between two of our forces—our front-line elements and our reserve elements. So our men just sit tight until morning. Then they close in on both the original infiltration parties and the elements that came through by frontal attack. Pocket them, and shoot them up. No quarter is asked or given. It's fast, bloody, and very final. Not a Japanese escapes.

Wonder if they learned that lesson up Singapore way?

On the coasts, we expect them to try outflanking us by landing attacks back of our lines. Accordingly we have formed "all around" defense. There is no such thing as making a landing without running into a "front" line, really.

But can we withstand a concerted "all front" attack? Actually, we're getting pretty worn down, what with lack of food, increasing illnesses due to fly-transmitted diseases, the endless battle to keep up one's inside morale—and the days and nights endlessly going by without the faintest sign of help from home. The kids on the fronts are doing a magnificent job. We have it comparatively easy here. But how long . . .

Friday February 20th

There's a silly, malicious story on the rounds that the reason General MacArthur doesn't come over here from Corregidor is that he is really sick with a serious heart condition. Forbidden to

leave the Rock, or the vicinity of the protecting tunnel, say the mongers.

Well, the facts are that, through bombing and shelling alike, he has lived "topside" in a house. Frequently he has gone up to observe during enemy shelling. During duty, he must be in the tunnel. Every communication nerve fiber in this whole setup terminates right there in the Administration-Operations lateral of Malinta Tunnel. General MacArthur runs this show through General Sutherland. He knows every minute what the situation is at all points. If he is in any doubt, he fires an order over to USAFFE Advance here on Bataan. Then his subordinate generals—yes, generals, not junior officers—paddle off to find out exactly what the score is. Immediately they determine that, they signal back to the Rock. Thus, through a tight chain, all vital information is relayed back by the experts who observed it. Orders are issued accordingly. Not only is there no need for his presence over here, but there is every need for his presence almost continuously in that tunnel—the focus point of this nasty little war, really.

I can help scotch that story, anyway.

*Sunday February 22nd*

Somehow, I think this Sunday will be different. Calm, maybe. From Manila I'm receiving an excellent program of chamber music, transcribed from American recordings. The guns are silent. The jungle is full of small sounds. Men's voices. Laughing. Always arguing. Once blistering adjectives, now of such common utility as to have lost all meaning. Later Chaplain Brown will be arguing about salvation. That's the way he does it. Argues with them in their own language . . . Well, not quite! And they listen, too.

The sky is deeply blued, and cotton balls of clouds float slowly westward. All is peace. Reminiscent of those sun-filled days when I lived at Military Plaza. I envision it now. But find intrusive Japanese officers in occupancy and a red Rising Sun flag at the pole head. And I cease envisioning.

Here they come. . . . And I said it was going to be peaceful! Dive bombers. They seem to be wary of the guns in the banana patch. I'm watching from the wireless shack. Now they pay off toward the center of the north front. Strange?

*Thump. . . . Thum-m-m-mp. . . . Thum-m-m-mp. . . .*

And again and again. Distance-softened.

But why over there? Have they found emplacements of our live-saving (for us!) 155-millimeters?

We puzzle. That smoke . . . It's not high-explosive stuff. Too yellow and white. Spreading, growing, climbing. . . . We look at one another, and each sees in the eyes of the other the question to which no one will give words. Has it come? The most dreaded factor of them all, mostly because we are so completely unequipped to protect ourselves against it. Yes, we have respirators. But not a stick of protective clothing to insulate our bodies against hideous burns.

Is it—is it gas!

Still no one speaks, while the great white cloud, now as high as the mountain chain in the center of the peninsula, moves sluggishly westward. Then the General shakes his head.

"That's not gas," he says positively. "And it's not the first time they've used smoke bombs. Been doing it on the First Corps front for two or three days."

"Smoke?"

"Yes. They're studying wind currents, velocity, and so on. When they get the answers they want . . ." His voice trailed off. Then he chuckled in his beard. "Do you know where your gas mask is?"

Later. The General was right. First Corps (through Lieutenant Tom Garrity, who has been doing a fine job as Intelligence officer up with General Wainwright) says it was smoke, mainly, but there were a few delayed-action high explosives among them, so that when our people went in to investigate they just happened to miss being blown to bits. Nice trick, that.

General Marquat here for a powwow on our new short-range Air Warning and Interceptor system. If it weren't for his ready

cooperation and that of some of his juniors—Colonel Sage and Colonel Peck, for instance—we couldn't do the trick.

*Monday February 23rd*

The Japanese announced that they got nineteen of our airplanes on the ground at Darwin on the 19th. The old story. I'll bet a dollar to a doughnut (no, I won't—I'll take the doughnut) that they were all parked in neat little rows.

Cleaned my guns today. Feel it in my bones that the time is coming.

Lefty was too beat out to go down to the Mariveles tunnel job today. He just can't understand why his still fine body won't take the grind. Plain malnutrition. Night blindness is increasing, too. There is much gastrointestinal trouble. Am shocked at Captain Bill Bradford's appearance. He's lost around forty pounds. Down at Little Baguio no one will give any sympathy to poor Ossie Lunde. He has had no more to eat than the next man, but for some reason retains most of his nice, rotund, well fed appearance. Hungry as all get-out. But his mates just glare and ask him where he's got the food cache.

*Tuesday February 24th*

The President spoke on the radio today. We got the transcription from KGEI. Said we mustn't be impatient. The Pacific is a big body of water. Months required for a round trip. Right. Dare one arise to remark that the observation lacks originality? Oh, hell! We know what he's trying to do: tell us to hang on the best we can because the folks at home are trying their very best. That's what it is. We know it. The President tried his damnedest to awaken us from our slumbers. Well, we'll wait. But will the Nips?

It doesn't make us mad to hear that.

Two things do make us mad: (1) flamboyant talks about how much money has been appropriated and how much we'll have in 1943 (when none of us will be around to hear about it) and what men and equipment we're sending to every country under the sun—except this one; (2) a roaring imbecile of a congressman telling the world we should bomb Tokyo off the map. With what, brother? Thousand-dollar bank notes?

Yes, we're unreasonable.

The artillery is opening up again. The shells are plumping not so far over the ridge this time.

Let's appropriate some more money.

### *Wednesday February 25th*

Somehow I feel that help is closer than we know. Maybe that springs from the knowledge that three P-40's actually are thought to have been shipped up from Australia and appear to be somewhere in Philippine waters now. If only they make it! Those three . . . Well, they're as good as thirty-three, so far as our morale goes. God! . . . At least someone is trying *now*. Lefty brought the news back from the Rock today.

And he's a major!

### *Thursday February 26th*

Yes, it is true! The first hint of any kind of help from outside, mentioned to us yesterday, seems to have a solid basis of fact. At least one small ship with three P-40's has arrived in Philippine waters from Australia. It is hiding out, trying to dodge Jap patrols, somewhere in the Visayas, and there may be a second one, with three more! I could kick somebody full of old buttonholes for sheer joy—if it weren't for the fact that such violence would involve too much work!

*Friday February 27th*

I've got a stomach-ache. Just can't assimilate luxuries. Last night General George produced a peach pie—from where? Where? No one ever asks that. The three of us polished it off so quickly that the scene must have looked like something you see in a Mickey Mouse. But it had its revenge on both him and myself.

Captain Whitfield is taking off at dawn tomorrow for Cebu. Running the air blockade. He's got almost a thousand pesos' worth of radiograms to send from us to our folks in the States. The Cebu Station is still transmitting traffic. I've sent one home.

General George has been told to report to the Rock on March 1. General Sutherland summoned him. Now what? Likely something to do with those P-40's in the south.

*Sunday March 1st*

General George spent the night on the Rock. He brings back various news. Some makes the hair tingle with anxiety. Some gives us reassurance, and some is good.

For the first: They got the old *Langley* in the savage fighting around N.E.I. It is reported she had one hundred P-40's aboard. Thirty-three got to Java.

And now for the better news. General MacArthur has indicated that no matter to what size this Air Force might expand upon the arrival of reinforcements, General George would continue to be its chief.

*Monday March 2nd*

Poor sleep last night. I don't know that it was so much the artillery that kept thumping most of the night. Rather it seems to be something within me—something that won't let down.

Tuesday March 3rd

It was almost eleven o'clock in the morning when the telephone cut short the entry of March 2nd. The call was from Corregidor. It stated that the Chief of Staff, General Sutherland, desired an immediate reconnaissance to establish the location and condition of our old friend, the steamship *Don Esteban*, reported by radio to have run afoul of strafers off Paluan Bay, upper Mindoro, last night, or, as it was then, the night of March 1.

General George was in the adjoining room considering an aircraft status report. I gave him the message. His brows contracted. The *Don Esteban* was one of our last hopes for food and medicine.

"Call Mariveles, and tell Captain Moore to take care of that reconnaissance without delay," he said quietly; "but warn him to keep a sharp eye because the Japs may be expecting some of us down that coast, and will try an ambush if they can."

I nodded and turned back into the radio shack. His voice recalled me.

"Better establish your Red Net on the telephone circuit, and keep the radio net on the alert."

"We have already been on the Red Net, General," I informed him, "because enemy aircraft have been reported active in the south just over the China Sea coast."

He nodded.

"Palafox Red—Palafox Red," I called into the telephone transmitter.

Palafox came in a faint reply. I repeated the General's instructions to Captain Moore.

"We can take off in just a few minutes," he said, "but—"

"But what, Joe?" I questioned.

"Just a minute." His voice came back. "Ossie Lunde is here; he wants to talk to you." A moment later Captain Lunde's voice came to me, tight with excitement.

"Ask the General if I can go on this mission," he said rapidly.

"I haven't strapped an airplane onto me for so long that I will soon be thinking it cannot be done. He has got to let me go!"

Captain Lunde had already done such an excellent job at the Operations Center at Little Baguio that I felt completely in sympathy with his request. Day and night, he had applied himself with admirable attention to constant routine air reports, alarms, decisions, and all the mass that crowded the log every twenty-four hours.

I put his case up to General George, and added my word of urging. The General considered a moment. He certainly could not afford to lose either Lunde or an airplane. On the other hand, Lunde was a qualified fighter pilot and just as entitled to "strap an airplane onto him" as the next man who wore wings over his left shirt pocket.

"All right," he said quickly.

I got back in on the Red Net cryptically waiting, only to hear Lunde's whoop of exultation as he received the permission. Then I closed the circuit, because when the Red Net was in operation conversation of all type was limited to the briefest possible mention in order not to occupy the line at the expense of some urgent call of warning or alarm. It was this very policy of Red Net operation—a thoroughly necessary one, nevertheless—which contributed in the highest degree to the contortions which Fate was planning to put us through. But we knew nothing of that.

At 11:25 a voice cut into the Red, asking for General George. Now that was unusual, since most calls came to me first for reference. Still, it was not too unusual, and debating between the desirability of delaying the Red line long enough to inquire into the identity of the caller, and the possibility that the voice belonged to some very high rank, I made a quick decision to avoid further delay and called him to the telephone. His instrument was in series with mine. I could hear his voice.

"Two large tankers, three supply ships, and an airplane in attendance are entering Subic Bay," said the voice.

My eyes blinked. That was a veritable fleet!

For a moment the General hesitated. Then:

"And what action does the Chief of Staff desire me to take?" he asked.

There was a hesitation at the other end, finally terminating in: "Why—he says you are to use your own judgment, sir."

"Thank you." General George replaced the field telephone with a snap. Drawing in swift little puffs on his dead pipe, he studied the bamboo slats of the roof for an intense moment. Then his words came crisply:

"Call Captain Moore's field again. Tell him as soon as the birds come in from the south to load with fragmentation bombs and stand by for orders."

I complied. He waited. Then: "Ask Captain Dyess to come here at once."

The tall, slender leader of the 21st Pursuit Squadron reported and came in. His eyes gleamed as General George outlined to him the report concerning Subic. He sensed that today was to be different. This time we were going to do something.

"Do you think that your homemade rig for releasing the heavy egg is ready for a practical test?" asked the General.

We could not see his lips because of the beard, but we knew his eyes were smiling with mischievous lights.

He referred to an ingenious conglomeration of valve springs, some steel valve rods, and other salvaged parts from cars and airplanes that the Matériel and Maintenance boys, headed by Technical Sergeant Jack Day, had accumulated and whipped into a Rube Goldberg gadget for carrying a single 500-pound bomb under the belly of a P-40, and releasing it at the right moment without pitching the heavy egg through the blades of the propeller. It converted a P-40 into a dive bomber—if you wished to indulge your flair for imagination and expression that far!

"There never was a better day, General," drawled Captain Dyess with an undertone of excitement. "I would like to try laying a brace of those eggs. I am sure it will work."

"All right. Load up and stand by for final orders."

"Thank you, General. I will be ready in an hour."

Fate was actually enjoying a little preliminary chuckle, but we knew nothing of this unseemly levity. Accordingly, we con-

centrated on the concoction of our little upside-down drama while she relaxed to watch the fun. The General picked up his field telephone to call Corregidor over the direct line.

"Captain Cummings," he said, talking to our Air Liaison Officer in the G.H.Q. tunnel at the Rock, "will you tell the Chief of Staff that I am very interested in that information—very interested?" He emphasized the word, and it was a part of the little drama alluded to that he could not speak over the direct line in exact terms; otherwise he might have said that he was interested in the Subic Bay information. As it was, he could only engage in double talk. "Do you understand?" Then he added: "And tell him it will be soon. Just tell him that."

Apparently receiving the assurance he desired, the General replaced the telephone and called to me.

"Call Mariveles and see whether Moore and Lunde have returned from the south."

I assured him that they had returned and were filing their reports.

"And I am afraid," I said, "that this report is not going to make the day any brighter for the Chief of Staff on the Rock, or for any of the rest of us, for that matter."

The General looked at me in unblinking query.

"Yes," I nodded. "They got the *Don Esteban*. Enemy reconnaissance located her during the afternoon; and last night, just off the northwest tip of Mindoro, Japanese destroyers got her. They threw shells into her until she caught fire. She is completely burned out."

The General was silent for several minutes. This indeed was a bitter pill for everyone. The *Don* had literally kept us alive with superlatively courageous runs from the Visayas region through the Japanese blockade. Always she'd been loaded well above her plimsoll marks with the food we needed so badly. I told the General, too, that Captain Moore had been told to prepare his ships for a bombing mission.

"All right. But first give your report to the Rock," he directed, his voice just audible.

I did so, and I heard Captain Cummings, usually calm and un-

disturbed by even the worst of news, exclaim some unintelligible word. He promised to relay the information at once to General Sutherland.

The voice of my Chief came again from the next room: "Now, call Captain Moore. Tell him to take off when ready, and to fly high to avoid warships, and take no unnecessary chances. But tell him to hit and hit hard. Then call Captain Dyess, and tell him the same thing."

These two calls went through on the Red Net. Then I called "Palace Red," which was the code for Captain Lunde's Operations Center at Little Baguio. His own voice answered. He had made a fast trip back in order to be in time for the show. His voice still betrayed the exhilaration he felt on making the flight and, secondly, in anticipation of the forthcoming attempt against Subic. As we spoke, I heard the roar of our P-40's engines.

Bataan Field cut in with, "Prestone reporting one bomber out." That would be Dyess. At the same moment Palafox reported, heard Prestone, postponed, and then reported, "Two bombers out."

The roar of Dyess's engines diminished quickly behind the jungle as Cabcaben Field reported one fighter out. That would be Captain Dyess's "weaver" or rear-guard plane.

The diminishing drone of the 40's was terminated by a voice on the Red Net. The Type 268 radio detectors had picked them up. With monotonous regularity their reports traced a spiral track in the southwest. The 40's were over Mariveles.

"Range 18,000, azimuth 220—range 19,000, azimuth 225—range 18,500, azimuth 220," intoned the voice.

Obviously, the airplanes were circling over safe territory to gain altitude. We could almost feel the throb of power of the Allison in Captain Dyess's ship as it sought to lift the four-ton plane and armament and its huge egg of deadly explosive higher and higher. Then there was a change.

"Range 19,500, azimuth 215," came the voice of the teller at the Type 268 set of the 200th Field Artillery, antiaircraft battery, as the ruthless electrical eye of the instrument pursued the now invisible fighters far beyond the towering Mariveles peaks.

A little tingle went up our spines. That meant the dead line for Subic and the enemy with his ships—the largest concentration of vessels we had ever reported in that area, which was a famous one for launching attacks down our west coast. A few more ranges, then the reflections were so feeble as to cease registering on the 268. Now, we could only wait. Anxiously we scanned the horizons, both with human and with electrical eyes—this time for enemies. There were none. Their very absence worried us.

Half an hour passed. An hour, almost.

"Target in the northwest!" snapped the 268 teller. Almost at the same instant the radio exhaled hoarsely and a voice cracked through: "One hundred, Alp. One hundred."

"He's coming home!" I exclaimed, for that signal indicated that he was approaching his homing zero position and was asking for clearance to come in closer to the field area. In another moment, loud and reassuring, went the clear signal from the Operations Center.

The air trembled and beat to the power of the 40's motor as she sliced the air like a flung knife and cut into her home field.

It was but a short time before Captain Dyess's voice came over the local wire. Even before his words registered actual information, I knew he had experienced some luck.

"I had me a field day," he vibrated. "The big egg was an undershot, hit about fifty or sixty feet from the biggest transport I could see. Certainly didn't do her any good, but I want to plant one right on her. Then I strafed her properly and ran the men off her. Then I saw many soldiers on the docks—" He paused for breath.

"What did you do?" I interrupted.

"I cleaned them off," he replied, and without gaining another breath, went on: "I saw a smaller boat with a lot of men and supplies."

"What happened?"

"I'm afraid the boat leaks. . . . It turned tail-up and sank. Fifties are powerful medicine."

"Then?" I pursued ruthlessly, knowing that he already had done far more than we could expect.

"I had to come home. But I want to try again right away. May I?"

The General, who up to today had not taken warmly to missions involving bombing with the few ships we had left, lost little time in making his decision. As a consequence, within forty minutes we heard the roar of engines again and Captain Dyess was away with his swollen load of death. In the meantime, some of the other pilots were reporting back in. They had carried six fragmentation bombs each, but, of course, of the thirty-pound size. These are not designed for such ambitious targets as we assigned to them. Useful to dismember undesirable personnel (from our point of view, at least), they are neither heavy enough nor powerful enough to rend ships, although a single one will shatter a small craft. The results would have been sad enough for our northern visitors, however, except that in such bombing exercises a high percentage of misses is to be expected from untrained pilots who are hard pressed just to keep their airplanes and themselves going.

Only occasionally did a particularly bright and therefore close tracer bullet slash by in the brilliant sunshine. But it hinted at other, unseen thousands of pointed steel messengers bent on their death in that same brilliant sunshine.

Beneath them they saw deep blue waters of Subic and the brown-and-green rise of Grande Island. Dock structures and piers. Small warehouses, scattered to minimize the destructive effect of bombings.

But moored to the piers were the targets that had first been caught with binoculars by the Naval lookouts high up on Signal Hill, overlooking the China Sea: two of the largest vessels yet observed to enter the bay. Apparently tankers, or large transports. Not less than 15,000 tons and likely more. (The Naval observer said one was 18,000.) There were other vessels, somewhat smaller, believed to be supply ships from their raised midship sections, their well decks and numerous booms. Far over against the old pier of our former Naval base at Olongapo lay a long, narrow gray vessel, either tanker or cruiser.

The pilots squinted through their windshields, long ago

scratched and dust-cut into a confusing opacity. What matter? thought one. Let 'er have it.

He swallowed. Pressure on the stabilizer. The engine roared as the nose dropped. Faster—faster—down he hurtled like a bolt from the heavens. The airplane had been weakened by months of savage war service. So numerous were her wounds from former raids and encounters that she was patched like an ancient screen door. Surely she would shake herself to pieces. Still faster—down . . .

Now!

The bomb release lever . . . At the same instant he reversed the stabilizer, and under full throttle leaped up and away. The machine had been freed of her deadening load of bombs. Up he shot from the deathtrap of encircling hills alive with vicious machine-gun fire.

A sudden uprush of air, vibrating and powerful. He trimmed to take it and grinned. His bombs . . . Far below six tall sticks of water grew and spread and slowly fell back.

A miss. But a near miss!

The fragments would not do that vessel any good. Next time he'd hit it right on the nose. It was his first try at dive bombing. And without a dive bomber, too! So he came in.

But as he did, he passed Captain Dyess going out. They grinned, gave a one-man handshake, and in a trice their ships were miles apart.

Captain Dyess sighted carefully, even on the approach. Wind, angles, and all had to be exactly the same—except for one tiny touch to bring that deadly load exactly on the target and not just under it. He lined up exactly with the same landmarks. His dive was a marvel of coincidental operation. He let go. . . .

A vast rush of smoke and water lifted ponderously into the air.

Water . . .

Yes, it was another close miss. Captain Dyess ground his teeth. An "over," but so close that the water cascaded over the ship and fragments tore ragged holes in her superstructure.

She was hurt. Plenty. The real damage would not be visible. The sea would be springing into her holds, bunkers, engineroom

from a hundred sheared rivets and plates buckled by the tremendous pressure of the explosion. After all, a 500-pound demolition bomb is packed with several hundred pounds of high explosive. Even ordinary gunpowder—a pound of it—has an explosive force of 18,000 pounds.

And so Captain Dyess came home with his weaver escort. This time his voice betrayed disappointment. But again his request for another try was immediate.

The General looked at the sky. Evening with its tricky winds, its deceptive shadows, and its depthless half-lights, was close. But the intuition that had served him so well on other occasions co-ordinated with his judgments, cold and implacable. He nodded.

"Tell Mariveles to stand by to cover the landing," he ordered me.

I called the instruction through the Red Net, got the acknowledgment, and a short time later heard "Prestone, check," which told me that Captain Dyess was rolling down the red-dusted runway of Bataan Field toward the blue-quiet Manila Bay and up into the deepening evening sky. The tireless roving eyes of the 268's caught him—and another, as one from Cabcaben swung high.

The same laboring fight for altitude with the heavy bomb, while the other, Lieutenant Burns from Cabcaben, wove around and about, his eyes ever on the alert for an enemy who might dart out of the paling skies and whip quick death into the overloaded fighter. Up, up, slowly.

The Red Net. It was Mariveles.

"We're missing one hen," called an anxious voice from the control point. "Is she in some other roost?"

A cold something rippled along my spine. A hen was an egg-carrying airplane. A P-40 had not come home. In an instant, I checked the other fields. And received the fatal answer:

"No."

A quick check on the stop-watch against the panel of the radio receiver, and I knew that the thin black hand had swept across one man's destiny. It was Lieutenant Crellin.

Opposite me in the little lean-to that was my office, the Gen-

eral's forehead was corrugated. Age and weariness suddenly weighted his features. He said no word. His fingers gripped tighter the graceful model of Bataan as, slowly, meticulously, he pushed a tiny chisel improvised from a surgical probe. He could lose airplanes, invaluable as they were to us these days. He could lose them. But when his boys went away and didn't come back . . . Well, that was different, and under the unspeaking exterior we knew how the pain shot through him to the depths of his being.

The sudden voice of the radio speaker jerked us to the realization that periods might punctuate the end of one sentence, but there was always another immediate and crowding.

"9 M N to Leo—9 M N to Leo."

Our nerves jerked. That was the voice of one of the field officers calling a P-40, and it was packed with alarm.

"Come in—come in."

Our eyes riveted on the speaker. But no answer came from the 40 winging above the field.

"9 M N to Leo. . . . Your eggs still are on. . . . Your bombs still are on."

Instantly again that cold ripple down the spine. But things were happening fast. A new voice—from one of the mountain observation points.

"That plane over Bataan seems to be having trouble. His bombs still are on his wings, and his landing gear is not all the way down."

Almost frantically now the radio blared its call. But still the pilot failed to acknowledge, always circling closer to the field—certain death to himself and no one knew how many others. It was quite possible, but dangerous, to land with the bombs still dangling from the racks. But to belly-land would bring a blinding explosion of six bombs in unison. . . . And oblivion.

Captain Lunde at Operations cut in with his own powerful transmitter. A gasp of relief. The hoarse voice of the pilot acknowledged. But . . .

"I've got to land; she's running hot."

We looked at each other unspeaking. Bombs on the rack, a

faulty landing gear, and the indicator on the instrument panel showing red because of a motor dangerously overheating. It looked like a distinctly bad moment to call a hand.

We could hear him now, winging low in the failing light. Now his motor dimmed. He faded from sound. An age-long interval. Then, on the Red Net:

“Landed O.K. . . . Palafox.”

A snapping of the tension. He was in, safe, at Mariveles.

The sag of relief was short-lived. Events, static for all too many days, had slipped into motion, and took on irresistibly gathering momentum. Again the radio:

“Enemy ships escaping from Subic!”

Now the weeks of preparation began to show results. There were several moments of ordered confusion. All fields and all planes in the air were notified. Captain Dyess, halfway back, responded to the inquiry as to whether he had any ammunition. In spite of the harsh scrubbing and heterodyne whistling of the Japanese feverish attempt to jam our Operations radio, Captain Dyess's voice came through that he had some ammunition left. Like all experienced pilots, he had kept a reserve for a possible fight on the way home. None of us then could imagine how large this small reserve of .50-caliber machine-gun ammunition was to loom in the events that now tumbled over one another in bewildering succession.

Four 40's now converged and arrowed through the dusk for the mouth of Subic Bay. In the shack no one spoke. This was not the time for words. It is easy to think now that our silence resulted from premonition. Maybe so. But the fact was that we did not speak.

The quiet was broken only by the Japanese code jammers. My hand was damp and aching from its long hold on the telephone transmitter. But I could not relax. The room grew hot. The ever present flies made one last mass attack, and our taut nerves found release in savage movements to drive them off and kill them.

Daylight faded from the little square of the window that faced the ruggedness of Bataan and Mariveles peaks across the jungle to the west. That meant highly unfavorable light conditions for land-

ing—if they came back. The first stirrings of the dusk inshore wind rippled the trees and whipped up little eddies of dust outside the window. And that would not help, either—if they came. . . .

But they *were* coming!

Again and again came the muffled indication that friendly craft were approaching the antiaircraft artillery area. We could not know how many until they actually registered with their Operations. But they were coming, anyway.

Our feelings gave way to curious expressions of relief.

The Red line:

“Relay from Signal Hill. . . .”

“Yes, go on,” I answered, my clammy fist tightening on the instrument.

“One 8,000-ton heavily laden transport or cargo vessel towing landing barges was attacked by one or more P-40’s off the west coast. The first pass set her on fire. At the second pass, she blew up with a tremendous explosion and disappeared completely.”

My tongue seemed to have lost its ability to articulate. I shouted something incoherent and jerked around to tell the others. But they had gone outside, the better to hear and check incoming motors.

“Wait,” continued the telephone voice. “You haven’t heard anything.”

What! Was there more?

It could not be. Only those who have had to sit by, as we had, day after long day, a tiny island of resistance in a sea of successful invasion, while bad news churned after bad news almost every hour, can know the intoxicating potency of good news. We couldn’t take much of this at one time.

“A second large ship, of 14,000 tons or more, following the first, was attacked by P-40’s. She has burst into flames and has veered for the beach, burning fiercely. She may have blown up by this time, as we cannot see well because of smoke and mist . . . There are large fires all over Grande Island . . . The air is full of heavy explosions from these and other fires burning in the dock area, the center of the island, and even on the west shore.”

I raced out of the shack and shouted the news to enlisted men

outside and to the General. His own shout of exultation culminated in a leap into the air. It was stuff much too strong to be taken with calm and reserve.

The lid blew off our long jammed-down feelings. Restraint went to the winds, and the jungle resounded to our whoops.

Had it not been for those same whoops, we might have noticed that these night winds no longer brought the sound of P-40 engines.

The ringing of the telephone brought me to my senses. We had come back in. The General stood near by.

"Cabcaben. Burns is in. Heavy tail wind. He has ground-looped."

My mouth went dry again. I repeated it to the General.

"How's Burns?" he questioned in a low voice, his mouth tightening.

I asked.

"Unhurt."

The General's eyes closed a moment.

The Red Net again. This time it was "Palafox"—Mariveles—and my heart squeezed. Somehow the General knew. He looked at me and waited.

"Lieutenant Fosse is in . . ."

The General's eyes bored me.

"Heavy tail wind. He overshot and cracked up at the far end. They don't know how he is."

I stared at the table. All the exultation was gone from me now. That was two of our four remaining airplanes. . . . Only two P-40's left to fight the war in the Philippines!

A faint voice in the Net. I listened, and my breath seemed to stop in my throat. I started to speak, stopped, and went on.

"Lieutenant Stinson is in. . . . He overshot because of the heavy tail wind. He cracked up at the far end."

It seemed as if I were repeating some stupid phrase from an inane dream. The General's voice came calm, yet somehow tense.

"The pilot . . ."

"They're going down to find out."

Silence, deep and painful.

"Airplanes are made to fight, and if they are broken up while

accomplishing their missions—that's war." The General spoke as though to himself. "No answer on the pilots?"

"Yes, just now," I answered quickly as the faint voice came to me. . . . "Both—O.K.!"

General George drew a breath of intense relief. He grinned broadly: "How many thousand tons of Jap ships is that?" Suddenly his glasses seemed to demand attention, for he took them off and began to polish them furiously, blinking eyes that all at once were too bright and distinctly moist.

"Thirty or forty thousand tons," said someone.

"Yeah, and we might 'a' busted them planes up on some cock-eyed leaflet-dropping expedition," contributed another noisily.

"Sure, and every day we just sat on the ground and waited for those Nips to come over, we simply invited them to blast us right out of the revetments without hitting back a single punch."

"Oh, well, that crack about 'Keep *It Flying*' means something now, doesn't it, boy?" put in General George.

It did. But the very absurdity of the situation relieved its grimness. The idea of fighting a war with *one* pursuit airplane was the flaming height of ludicrousness. Here we were, the Air Force of the richest and most powerful nation on earth, fighting a major war eight thousand miles from home. And we had *one* single fighter airplane, ancient, overworked, and so patched that her air speed actually was but a fraction of its rated maximum! We laughed. And continued to laugh, with the effect of untying the knots in our bodies and minds. After all, those overage crazy-patched fighters had knocked out something like \$40,000,000 worth of enemy shipping that afternoon.

Our spirits rose. And went higher in well deserved elevation. It was the hardest blow the Air Corps had delivered to the enemy marine forces since Captain Kelly had bombed the battleship *Haruna*, or her sister ship, out of existence. And we'd done it with fighters, not huge bombers. What was more, we were to discover when Captain Dyess came up from the field that he had done it with .50-caliber machine guns, and not bombs at all. Except for certain smaller ships and launches, the whole smashing blow had been delivered by his airplane. The great bomb had struck the

island in the dock area. A huge fire, said by Naval observers to have been one of the gasoline stores, immediately flared from the island. Other fires and explosions followed.

Then he had got the radio about the escaping vessels.

Diving like a wry-eyed hawk attacking a whale, he'd ripped bullets into a large transpacific steamer. He'd raked her from the stem, then roared around and hit her from the stern. Already, to his amazement, he'd seen the forward end burst into flames. Then the after deck spouted fire. His eyes had been riveted to the spectacle, and he'd forgotten the constant arcking of the tracers spitting at him from every direction.

He'd peeled away.

And saved his life.

For at that moment, heaven and sea had roared to a vast explosion. The sides of the huge ship had dissolved in flame and boiling water.

It was fantastic, unbelievable—dazing. But not too dazing for him to collect his stunned senses and turn into the next ship, a giant, from which tracers cut at him in a dozen places. His guns hammered their deadly riveting. He'd swept and come back. Repeated. Flames. . . .

But now his guns had stopped. There was no more ammunition in his belts.

He'd swept up and away in a darkening sky streaking with the demoralizing fire of tracers. It was not until he arrived at headquarters that he'd known of his completely successful attack on the biggest ship. It blazed all night and was a smoldering hulk in the morning mists.

Again the telephone. It was from Edwards.

"General Wainwright has been trying to get through," said his voice, "but because of the Red Net could not make it. He charged us to present General George with his personal congratulations and thanks for the excellent work in Subic Bay on his left flank."

Yes, the congratulations could come in now. It was truly a splendid piece of work; we had invested all we had—and we had collected plenty.

The telephone rang again. This time from Headquarters—General Sutherland, the Chief of Staff for General MacArthur.

Aha!

General George took the telephone.

And then there came to my ears, on the extension, that which stunned me and left me almost without breath:

For the second time in six weeks, neither General MacArthur nor General Sutherland had been informed of our intent to conduct a night flight; and again, only by the merest fraction, had we avoided being smashed by our own guns. From a military standpoint it was inexcusable, and General Sutherland, dealing straight from the top of the deck as always, let us have it. To us lesser individuals it was a blow—no congratulations, no thanks. But he and General George, in the years of their unusually fine relationships with each other dealt that way—toe to toe, and trade fair and fast. Again something had slipped; we were told about it—and plainly! Then, while we held our breath, he demanded the accounting of our losses. His crisp words showed the tension under which he labored. An unending minute passed; then:

“What’d we do to them?”

As he listened to General George’s recital of damage inflicted on the enemy, his voice softened. Unfeigned interest now replaced the indication of tension. He questioned on this point and that. He learned that, except for Crellin, our pilots were safe. And that likely we could salvage one of the wrecks. Now, he praised!

We recovered our breath. The threatening voice eased off.

Yes, that was a balm, at least. But what of this bewildering contradiction of the actual and the seeming?

My mind went back over every detail of the morning and afternoon: the rush of events, the many contributing factors, the multiplicity of sources . . . One stubborn insistence dinned in all considerations: the Chief of Staff had not known of the night plan. Then he never had been consulted; then he probably never had told anyone that General George was to “use his judgment” in the matter of enemy ships. But he *had*. It was on the record, and I had heard it on the telephone.

Yes, I had heard *it*. But *whom* had I heard? That was the question.

We had been working on the reconnaissance mission for General Sutherland, the USAFFE Chief of Staff. Our minds were conditioned to telephoned reports from him, directly or indirectly. But this voice on the line, the voice that interrupted the Red Net and asked for General George personally . . . Was it from USAFFE at all? If not, then from whom, where?

Well, it could be from my own organization at Little Baguio. Lieutenant Edwards?

Yes, but he'd never ask for General George. And *he* had no connection with the Chief of Staff. Still the thing wouldn't work out any other way. Now, how to identify that voice and fit it into my theory, without putting ideas into Art's head? I called him, questioned him at length about calls he had made, without letting him become suspicious of what a crucial part I was beginning to suspect he had played in this drama. But although I got something that strengthened my theory, it was half an hour before I had nailed it right down. Lieutenant Edwards was on the line again.

"I have just thought of something rather queer about my first call concerning ships in Subic," he said.

My hair tingled. Here it came! I was sure. "Yes?"

"Well, General George said something I couldn't quite connect up with me or Colonel Gregg, but here it is: He asked me what action the Chief of Staff desired him to take—"

"Yes, Art, go on." I tried to sound calm and moderately interested.

"Well, I'd been talking to Colonel Gregg about putting this Subic stuff on the flash net to be sure it got to you right away, and he said that I'd better at least get it to the General, and then he could use his own judgment as to what to do about it—if anything.

My head hummed. There it was! Colonel Gregg was the executive officer of the Fifth Interceptor Command, our outfit. And an executive officer in a smaller organization like ours coincided in title and functions to the *chief of staff* of a large headquarters like USAFFE and not infrequently was called chief of staff.

It was just one of those impossible coincidences which led to a series of impossible coincidences, all of which added up to a very dizzy one hundred. *The Chief of Staff* never had been informed. But a "chief of staff," in reality lower in rank than our General, had been informed, and of course he wouldn't try to advise the General on such a matter. Of course, it was up to the General to use his own judgment, if he was worth his salt at all!

Apparently something of the same kind accounted for the failure of the notice of the night flight to reach General Sutherland. The wrong "chief of staff" had been informed!

And so was written another chapter in this game where the stakes can be everything and the whole thing is—for keeps.

Later (same day). All morning we have been the subjects of highly conflicting emotions. Understandable, that. What do we do now? At least the death of our little Air Force was one of unmitigated glory. It delivered a gigantic blow out of all proportion to its size—then literally collapsed. We have been bombed twenty-seven times in thirty-one days. Yet not once has the enemy smashed a P-40 in the hidden jungle revetments. That luck could not hold forever, though. One day it would happen that one, two, or more of them would go hurtling skyward in flame and smoke from direct hits. And we'd have nothing to show for that but wreckage.

No. We'll take it this way. And every man jack can hold his head high.

Possibly we can salvage one fair plane out of the three that are wrecked. And also, the never-say-die crews are trying to fit an engine for one model into the reconstructed frame of another. Maybe they can. We'd have three then.

And where is the retaliation? Surely they'll come over today and shower us with hate made in Tokyo, revenge originated on Bataan, and bombs with fillings made in America. It's true: repeatedly we have identified among exploded fragments scrap automobile parts which our country so consistently sold to Japan on a policy indignantly defended—even encouraged—long after it was

known that we would some day, soon, meet Japan in war. Also included in bombs: razor blades, bottle caps, cement . . .

I am nervous. Maybe I'm filled with razor blades. Feels like that inside. Have tried to forget it by recourse to an occupation which has helped immeasurably—study. It has required a month to learn how to use a Japanese dictionary with even poor facility. I've memorized most of the fundamental radicals. Can translate with the speed of a slug on sticky flypaper. Also practicing shorthand daily. Picked up a manual at Corregidor. Also bringing my Morse sending and receiving speed up nicely. Prevents one from going clean batty.

Here they come!

The Red Net warning is through to us. Twenty-eight dive bombers and three fighters heading in. Keep your head low, brother! This is it. . . .

Later. That wasn't it. The whole show of them circled widely to the north, then disappeared over Manila and last were recorded southing over Mindoro. They didn't drop a stick or fire a shot. Just a ferry convoy, we believe. Headed into the bitter fighting for the N.E.I. They'll be killing our people down there. God! What we couldn't have done to break that up with just one George-trained, Dyess-led squadron of new P-40's or 39's! With what we know now . . .

We're going to have another party tonight. The boys are dragging that poor old piano through the jungle to the clearing out here in front of the shack. Going to be a real shindig to celebrate Subic. About a dozen nurses will be our honored guests.

Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup>

It required the Japanese themselves to put the capper on the Subic show. We've intercepted the usual Tokyo propaganda broadcast.

This is the way they described Subic. (Yes, they did!)

"Fifty-four heavy bombers, mostly four-engined . . . attacked our shipping in Subic Bay March 3. . . . Some tonnage sunk."

Then followed the usual story of "treachery" and "machine gunning of helpless soldiers swimming in the water," and they concluded with a story that at least four of our "four-engined bombers" had been shot down. It was said we were operating from a "secret base on Luzon."

So, that was just a lot of high-powered fairy-storying on Ed Dyess's part! Ed was too stupefied to speak when I gave him a copy of the intercept. The whole camp is enjoying the joke to the peak. Just think what we'll do with the fifty heavies we still must have left. If only we can find our own secret drome and see how it got there!

We had a grand party last night. An unforgettable scene in the soft brilliance of a full tropical moon. Clear, strong voices singing to the accompaniment of the battered piano. Hauntingly wistful, some of it. . . . Paradoxically, in the same spot that has reverberated so often to the crashing of bombs. Why—why must man devote himself to mass evil when the individual as an individual is essentially good?

This morning the General cooked us pancakes. Utterly, unbelievably delicious, they were. He didn't ask where we got the flour and sugar. The flour was a small, unspoiled total of what some of the boys had retrieved from a sunken barge in the bay. The sugar . . . Well, I don't remember! Again I had that queer, stuffed feeling after only two or three pancakes. Actually there was an intoxicating effect. Lefty is "slap-happy" from eating four of those heavenly golden circles. Feast. . . . Feast!

Twenty-seven bombers in the area.

They didn't come in. But they did work over the north front.

*Thursday March 5th*

We've lost our "secret drome," and Heaven only knows how many of our "four-engined bombers." Or rather, Tokyo only knows—for Tokyo has broadcast another splendid fabrication: Their air force raided our "secret base" and destroyed no fewer than thirty-seven of the bombers which so "treacherously" at-

tacked the shipping in Subic Bay on March 3; the remainder of the hapless machines were certainly so damaged as to be unserviceable. Thus quickly have the sons of Nippon avenged Subic Bay.

As for us, our philosophy is amazing, but it is simple. Just "Come easy—go easy!"

Later, General George and I spent the main part of this day inspecting and visiting at Mariveles Field, where Joe Moore and his outfit had been doing such a super job of organizing the 20th Pursuit Squadron. Squadron, indeed! Since we piled them all up the other night, Joe's outfit does not have any planes; but they aim to have some. There is a single-motored Navy job that has been lying at the bottom of Mariveles Bay for weeks. They are raising it. They swear they will have it going, and I believe they will.

At 12:30 everybody gathered in the C.Q.'s office to hear the newscast from Corregidor—the usual "Voice of Freedom" program broadcast from a station deep in the heart of the Malinta Tunnel and equipped with apparatus snatched from the Manila stations at the last moment. It is these broadcasts which have knit us together and given us a sense of unity, even though all too often the encouraging words were fashioned from sheer, determined fantasy. The enemy has used every means to jam these broadcasts, not only because of their usefulness for us, but because of the unquestioned effect they have upon Filipinos all through the Islands. Our agents tell us that. On this day, though, there was nothing of encouragement. The situation in Java is most critical. We now believe that practically all of our tiny remaining Asiatic Fleet is either sunk or disabled. The boys listened without comment. After all, what is there to say? Someone switched the receiver off, and we went to work establishing an interceptor center at this field. The unit is housed in a fine, unfinished government building connected with the Quarantine Station. Bombs have smashed part of it.

Having heard so much about it, the General was curious to see our "Air Corps Navy." This proved to be a motorboat about thirty feet long, a former Pan American Airways craft sunk at the beginning of the war. Air Corps people managed to raise it, condition it, and equip it with four .50-caliber machine guns. At night the

boys cruise up and down the coast and blast anything that looks Japanese. Of course, it is not in the same class at all with Lieutenant Bulkley's P.T. boats, which have done such splendid work in these waters. (There is one man who does not know the meaning of hesitancy or fear. General George chuckles every time we see him. Last time he said, "There's the kind of a wild man I love.")

The General's dream of all underground hangars and quarters at Mariveles Field is becoming outlined with the first signs of reality. Two tunnels are being driven. Personally, I haven't the courage. . . . Somehow, it seems so fruitless with everything so heavily against us; but he is undaunted and enthusiastic about the progress.

In the Naval area, the Army has taken over. The former Navy occupants have moved *en masse* to the fortified islands, and we have taken over their tunnels and establishments—except the *Campus*. Saw Commander Bridgett again for a brief moment. He's a right sort. Came up to Bataan Field to give us a lecture on dive bombing, just before Subic.

Friday March 6th

I have spent a good part of this day complying with an order from the Rock to write recommendations for citations for all those pilots who participated in Subic Bay, and for all noncommissioned officers and others who had any part in manufacturing the bomb release device. And is it a pleasure!

We made a haul this morning. My two special agents working in this area laid a neat trap, and we captured four Sakdalistas, one of whom was the second ranking officer for that organization in this section of the Philippines. Two of them actually were working in labor parties on Bataan Field. Is it any wonder that the enemy knew of our take-offs almost as soon as we did ourselves? We turned them over to the Constabulary. I have a deep-seated conviction that those four constitute thoroughly bad insurance risks.

We've lost four agents of our own in the past week. Two never came back from assignments, and two were shot crossing the bay

from the Cavite shore. Another agent reported seeing sixty trucks in a convoy south of Manila. Ten were loaded with Japanese nurses. Seven were filled with dead soldiers and half a dozen more with wounded. At La Salle College on Taft Avenue there were twelve light tanks. He claims that there are only about a thousand Japanese troops in Manila and suburbs. Another report indicated that for a long time there were only twenty soldiers in Cavite and that they lived in constant fear of counterattack by Americans or a rising by Filipinos. We know some groups only await the word to turn on the Japanese, and everyone is praying for another air raid by our planes. If they only knew . . .

Still another agent has warned us repeatedly that the Japanese have refloated a number of interisland vessels which we'd sunk in the Pasig River. These boats have been towed to Cavite Navy Yard, where the enemy is mounting 75-millimeter field guns. Among them are the *Santa Naga*, *Tarasita*, *Señora de la Paz*, *Señora de Guía*, and *Palarwan*. The *Latourche* of 6,000 tons, which was scuttled at Vitas, Tondo, is being refloated.

Every agent brings increasing reports of Japanese preparations for a final attack. Landing barges are being hidden along the Cavite shore, others are being towed northward toward Pampanga. A large number of Japanese officers have been ordered to quit their quarters at the Avenue Hotel in Manila and proceed to Bataan. With tears in their eyes they have bidden goodbye to their friends and frankly indicated their doubt as to whether they would come back alive. Of course, my agents are concerned primarily with enemy airfields; but an efficient and very clever spy ring conceived by Colonel Willoughby and operated directly by another general who must remain nameless, was performing amazing exploits every day and night. In fact, these leakages have so mystified and enraged the Japanese that a grisly message coming through yesterday declared that the enemy had marched thirty-six Filipino reserve officers, rounded up at random, into La Loma Cemetery and shot every one of them as a suspected spy. As a matter of fact, not one of them was guilty. Although agents constantly make the dangerous trip across the bay, one of our best sources of information is a secret radio station hidden in the very heart of the Jap-

anese stronghold. But even with good monitoring, they would have one perplexing time to achieve its discovery.

### *Saturday March 7th*

Now it appears that our smash on Subic Bay saved us from the bicoastal attack I had so confidently predicted for this period. Last agents' reports state that there was to be a synchronized drive, but that the west-coast phase was thrown clear out of gear by the Subic disaster to their arms. And now today we learn that yesterday information had reached our heavy artillery that a convoy of seventy-six trucks was due to move into support position for a drive down the east front. During the final daylight hours the crews registered their guns exactly upon certain known road junctions. Then after dark came the signal that the trucks were moving into the fire zone. With one concerted roar they bellowed their welcome and continued firing as fast as the crews could load. It was a shambles. Twenty-nine of the seventy-six trucks were blasted to bits, while others were wrecked in the ensuing panic. So possibly we have fire-forged another brief reprieve for ourselves. But it is near, and they won't stop for that.

We close this week on a dismal note. Batavia is almost surrounded. The Japanese are closing in on my beloved Bandoeng. Northern Australia will be next.

And where does that leave us?

Well, for most, it means we shall be left right here! Our physical exhaustion is more apparent every day. Gastrointestinal afflictions are striking every other man. We still have some quinine, although we are discontinuing the preventive dose. What we have left must be saved for the already sick.

### *Sunday March 8th*

Our war is three months old, this date. The anniversary was ushered in by an alert at three o'clock. Mysterious lights were flashing all

the way round from Orani to San Fernando and down the Pampanga shore toward Manila. That was alarming, but not so much as the report that seven hundred vehicles were moving out of Manila for Bataan. Our lone P-40 took off in the bright moonlight half an hour later, flew the circuit, but saw nothing on the pale ribbon of pavements except two very startled Japanese staff cars.

I am getting careless about recording bombings. We had one just after dawn yesterday morning which was little short of beautiful to behold. Orange tracers laced the pale sky, still dark with sleep. The orange-white flashes of the antiaircraft guns threw into startled relief the serrated outlines of the banana patch, while the exploding shells far above winked in miniature lightning against unmoving clouds. Then the jumping fire of the bombs. Stick after stick of them this time. They hit the Philippine Air Depot, smashing the kitchens and causing casualties. One more died today.

As though in protest at this premature violence, Mother Nature shook herself impatiently today and we felt it—a definite earthquake shock, accompanied by rain and high winds.

Anniversary present: Batavia has fallen.

Alarm: A Japanese destroyer is coming into San José, Mindoro. Our little garrison there is burning fifty thousand precious gallons of aviation fuel and racing for the hills. Another savage blow.

Puzzle: General George came into the wireless shack today and, looking about apparently to satisfy himself that no one was within hearing, fixed me with his intense dark eyes and spoke in the most serious tone that I have heard him use in a long time.

"I am not at liberty to tell you very much," he said, "and you must give me your word you will not speak of this to anyone."

I gave him my solemn assurance.

"The fact is that, wherever I go, you must come too, since during our association you have literally become the other half of my brain. I know what I want and frequently seem to know what is needed, but I cannot express it properly. That's where you come in as the other half." He stopped again, then added almost longingly: "Besides, I must have someone I can talk to."

He paused, and I waited with a thumping heart and a distinct

presentiment that my feeling regarding momentous events before this moon was dead was going to snap into tangible form.

"I've got to go to the Rock tomorrow morning. It may be to tell me that I must go into the southern islands. Bill Bradford is down there now. He will bring back an eight-year-old Bellanca that he used to fly commercially. Tell him that I said he was to put it into immediate shape to make a return run to the south. And when it goes I want you to be ready to take off with it."

My breath seemed to stop in my throat. I could not speak. All the resistance I had been consciously and unconsciously building up, day after day, and night after black night against capitulating to that tendency to allow even the faintest hope of release from Bataan, suddenly dissolved. I wanted to live! I wanted to be free of this hideous prison where disease, starvation, and sudden hate-filled death are gaunt spectral companions of our every hour. Then I heard myself speaking.

"Lefty?"

The General nodded.

"You both are urgently needed in Mindanao. He must make a complete survey and build airfields for the reinforcements. You must organize and tie in the coast-watcher and Air Corps spy system with what will be developed in the Visayas later, and integrate it all with the Luzon organization."

Suddenly he was gone, and I was staring with hot, blurring eyes at the place where he had been sitting.

Monday March 9th

I am not sure, as I sit on my favorite log this soft evening waiting for General George to return from Corregidor, whether this will be my last night on the now world-famous Bataan.

Bill Bradford drummed out of the overcast sky at dawn this morning with the Bellanca. Lefty and I traced every foot of his progress from the moment we first heard him; and we stared at each other in unspeaking anxiety when his motor swelled overhead—then droned away into the north. He could not find the

• field . . . Perspiration seemed to scald me, and I fought an insane desire to race out of the shack and yell at the top of my lungs for Bill to return this way. And then he did return and settled down perfectly. We both were too weak to speak. That is what is known in Bataan as "sweating out" an arrival.

Lefty and I packed all day—and repacked. We've lost almost everything of value we ever had, and it is with a savage tenacity that we attempt to retain what we have left. But we must abandon all except the barest essentials. I make a pile of the things I know I may not take with me. Then I pack the remainder. Half an hour later I take the packed material and split it in two piles again. Grimly, I repack—only to repeat a little later.

At dark the General returned.

"You will leave at three o'clock on the morning of March 11th," he told us quietly. "I'll not be going with you."

Lefty and I stared at him uncomprehendingly. Whatever elation I had experienced in the past twelve hours was hidden by black despair. Then with the General's next words it shone out in full brilliance.

"But I'll be following you," he grinned mischievously. "I can't tell you just how at this moment, but I'll be there."

He turned to me.

"I'm going to need some heavy work from you and your Intelligence staff at Little Baguio. It may mean all night for them. I must have in my hands by the afternoon of March 11th a complete objective folder of bombing targets in this entire area including Cavite, Manila, Pampanga, Subic Bay, and adjacent districts. Only military targets are to be included. Those will be based in order of priority upon the maximum damage that can be inflicted upon the enemy, plus the maximum political and public morale effect that can be achieved through the bombing. Make it complete with photographs, sketches, and logistical data."

Not until I saw the completed objective folder later in Mindanao did I realize fully how well Captain Snead, Lieutenant Edwards, Lieutenant Thomas, Sergeant Roulston, Corporal Corey, and Corporal Prescott had carried out the instructions of the General. Fortunately we had been accumulating these data all through

the campaign in the weird hope that bombers might be sent to us from Australia.

Later. We have been sitting here silently for several minutes, the General, Lefty, and myself, staring at one another with puzzlement—every sense alert to read meaning into a strange sound.

Not that the distant thudding of a gun is new to us. Hardly. Nor the closer *cru-u-ump* of the shell. But there is something different about this one. Subconsciously the mind becomes analytic and engages ceaselessly upon a dissection and classification of the elements in war's cacophony. And this new *thump* and *cru-u-ump* has not been tabbed. But I am certain that I am right.

"That gun is being fired from the surface of water," I insist. "And it's coming from the Manila Bay side. It's a Naval shelling from one of those interisland boats they've raised and gunned."

But the General rejects my thesis. Lefty is noncommittal. I go onto the porch, then out into the night. Artillery is active, but not abnormally so. There is a peculiar flat quality to this single discharge at regular intervals. The shell bursts are familiar enough, only closer. I go back into the shack and call Lieutenant Edwards. He in turn calls the Second Corps C.P.—and comes back ten minutes later with the startling news that Cabcaben is being bombarded from a vessel at extreme range out in the Bay.

"That does it!" exclaims the General, chuckling. (But I am not so sure he thinks it's all a joke.) "The Second Corps has to inform us that our own airfield is being shelled."

"Obviously that's wrong, sir," I say with some asperity. My would-be dignified academic demeanor amuses the General. He laughs, then is serious again.

"But there is too much smoke not to have a bit of fire, anyway," he admits. "I really think that you may be right. But if you are, the enemy has revealed a hand before the play. They should have kept this one until they were ready with a dozen ships instead of one."

Late in the night the telephone gave us the story. True enough, some unknown vessel had ventured within six thousand yards of the Bataan coast and, firing regularly and methodically, had shelled positions back of the MLR—apparently endeavoring to

feel out the range and to draw fire from our beach defenses which would reveal our positions. Little damage was done. But there will be hasty reorganizations to meet this new threat.

Toward dawn we were awakened by a heavy storm of artillery from near the center of our north front. Heavy guns had taken up the business and had driven off the marauder in a shower of geysering shells.

That's a taste of what may be expected when the big blow comes.

*Tuesday March 10th*

Unless the six dive bombers which have been droning through the cloud banks to the west searching for likely targets close in on Bataan Field and place their eggs in the hidden revetment which houses our old Bellanca, or unless any one of the thousand other war-born mishaps occurs to it or to us, this would seem to be my last day on Bataan.

The General has told us little more. He has given us secret orders to Lieutenant Colonel Elsmore at Del Monte, Mindanao. We fly to Panay tonight, and then, when we dare risk the enemy air patrols, go on to Mindanao.

"I shall be following by special small boat," he explained. "I'll leave here about 7:30 tomorrow evening. There will be some others. . . . Important others," he added. "Besides getting yourselves south without losing your airplane or your lives, you will keep sharp eyes for Japanese Naval concentrations. If you see anything more than an occasional destroyer, you must radio us without delay from Iloilo, stating strength, disposition, and direction. In other words, accomplish a 'recon' sweep of the waters you pass over between here and Mindanao. Got it?"

We got it.

And with the lengthening of the shadows this evening, Lieutenant Edwards gripped my hand, fastened his eyes on me for a moment, and then turned and, with never a backward look, strode away to his waiting dust-plastered car. He had brought an outline

of the objective folder, and we had studied it together. He knew I was going south.

"You won't come back," he said steadily as we shook hands.

My lips parted to say something in denial. But no sound came. For somehow deep within me I knew that Art spoke the truth, simply, unalterably.

He's gone. I wonder if I'll ever see him again.

And Lou Bell: he came, too.

God! . . . I can't stand much of this. The only sustaining thought is that what we do down there must be accomplished before any kind of aid can be brought north for the relief of this prison peninsula.

And so, for me, draws to a close the era which began with that first fateful telephone call back in the blackout gloom of Quarters 43 at Fort McKinley in the middle of the night of December 8th. And then, although it was one night later, the thudding detonation of bombs, and the panic-urged arcking of the tracers from every corner of the black, hidden earth.

Later. It is dusk. I have wandered away from the shack and am sitting upon the unyielding foundation of "meditation log." To the east, across the bay, the blue promise of night settles softly. Startlingly, almost artificially, against this are etched the pale, white arms of a single leafless tree. It is all very unreal and stage-like. Some unspeaking figure should emerge from the wings and, in purposeful pantomime, give forward motion to the play for which the setting is designed.

It is quite dark. The broadcast has ceased. Tonight the guns are silent.

There is an inner peace, too—for here, paradoxically, in the heart of war's savagery, I have found a peace I never knew before we came to Bataan.

Sitting out here nightly, just as I did at the former camp at Little Baguio, I have achieved a genuine communion with the Infinite. God is just there, beyond the vast altar of stars, and He is not unkind. He does not breathe fire nor reap the air with brimstone. Only the stumbling fools beneath for whom He sorrows do that. How utterly different this concept which speaks to me with

all the power of silent Truth—how different from the fanatic, dogmatic, unsympathetic preachments which, alas, too many clergymen have made to bewildered people who would know the truth! I think of Reverend Henry Lewis, forceful, farseeing, but lonely exponent of a church for the people as opposed to a church for the church's sake. Sometimes I feel it would have been better to be born definitely blind and flexibly deaf to the realities of human needs. Henry Lewis enjoys no such merciful anesthesia. Personally, I believe the task of facing an army of bloodthirsty Nipponese on Bataan is a relative sinecure. It must be easier to face honest animal antagonisms than the cold rock of minds closed by refusal to see the world as it exists.

Yes, here on Bataan I have found the greatest peace and true spiritual communion; but no man in clerical robes blasting at me with theological missiles of threat, accusation, and dry, unintelligible seminary examples could have achieved that for me, or for anyone else. Man and woman must seek solitude, leave the city and commune with nature, at regular intervals. A bicycle or a good pair of walking shoes will accomplish this quicker than any threat of everlasting damnation.

Lefty Eads has at last gone to sleep.

No longer does he jerk about under his mosquito net and yawn nervously.

I know well what he has been experiencing. The mind races with a thousand and one thoughts, all tumbled and insistent, yet dissolving into meaningless nothings immediately it seeks to concentrate upon one and bring it to searching attention.

Still, there is a theme, a theme of incredibleness.

Bubbling away is the stir of doubt as to the success of the venture. Doubt is immediately succeeded by a new ripple of excitement that drives sleep galloping out of the open door and far away into the soft Bataan night. . . . Can this actually be the end of this Bataan adventure from which not one of us truly expected to emerge unscathed, if at all? Is this to terminate the interminable? Does this mean the dawn after an endless night twisted by nightmarish people with thick, bandy legs, wide, flat noses, sparse,

bristled hair and bobbing skull-domed helmets? Can it be that once more we shall set foot upon a land other than this tiny heel of up-thrust, jungle-smothered peninsula which has been our prison ever since the far-back day when, through solid banks of dust churned up by endless, greatly burdened trucks, we came into Bataan?

Moldy rice. . . . Salmon. Salmon that leaves a tiny brackishness in the throat; tiny at first, but it suddenly balloons out and makes the belly tighten in quick jerks. Thin, native coffee, unroasted, tasteless—made the thinner by tinned milk cut to half and more by water. Flies. . . . Flies. . . . Moldy rice. . . . Moldy . . .

And when that was gone?

Eat it.

Maybe the ration will be cut tomorrow. Wait a minute, there. Don't eat that piece of bread. Sure, you're hungry, but you'll be hungrier at noon. And nothing to eat until four o'clock. Save it. Take it and stow it in that empty biscuit tin where the ants won't get it. And we'll have a lunch at noon!

What about tomorrow night at this time, if the reconnaissance-escape attempt is a success? What will we be doing?

That's easy.

Eating, my friend.

We'll eat our way right through one house and into the next. House? What house? Where?

Won't know. Mindoro, maybe, if we're unlucky. Panay, if we're luckier. Mindanao, if we're all lucked up. And if we've no luck at all? If the Nips sight us with a single one of their oldest fighters, what then? Too bad. That's all.

This old Bellanca we're using to run out is eight years old. She rates one undersized engine. Can't rev up for more than a hundred and twenty-five or so miles an hour without danger of exhausting her gas supply short of help. Her armor? Don't be ridiculous! Doped fabric over metal and wood struts. Will hardly stop a 20-millimeter explosive cannon shell! A single .30-caliber machine-gun tracer can rip fire through her from stabilizer to engine cowling. Eight years old. And we propose to take five men in her and as much baggage as we can stow!

Guns to fight back? Well, we have our .45-caliber automatics, haven't we? Pistols, not machine guns.

Yes, that's right. Must remember to repack when the sentry comes to awaken us at two A.M. Can't take even that much weight. Must leave something else behind. What good will any of it be if the poor old Bellanca falters on the take-off and buries herself and us at the bottom of Manila Bay?

When the sentry comes to awaken us. That's funny. Awaken from what? Still, Lefty has managed to get to sleep. But not for me. My restlessness increases. I fling aside the mosquito net and slip out onto the porch. The green, bamboo strips that form the floor flex under my tread, causing the General's bunk to sag slightly. He moves. I stop. Then move on. He must have his sleep.

On the porch the night has taken a seat and waits there without sound or motion.

Unbelievably still. The front has gone as silent as the dead men who mount their macabre guard there. The monkeys in the tall trees have gone to sleep. Even the insect world is held in unseen abeyance. The stars glitter in sapphire clusters—bright, warm-like tiny holes punched in some monstrous blackout curtain. I slip on the flat-soled sneakers I bought in Singapore and wander slowly away from the porch. Automatically my feet take me through the stiffy undergrowth to the prostrate log where I so often have sat and communed with myself, with nature, and with the Infinite.

I sit down. And my throat tightens. Over the bomb-ripped banana grove, far to the east over Manila Bay, the sky is lightening.

Dawn?

No. It is the dying moon, slowly, weakly rising. Jaundiced and emaciated, it casts a pale, lemonish light.

The time has come. That is all the moon we want. Enough for a guide, but not enough to reveal our position in the sky. Even as I make my way back to the shack, the shadow of the sentry moves out of the jungle. His journey terminates in a sudden spot of light within the house. Lefty is up. And so is the General.

No words are spoken. Quickly I make last-minute preparations, repacking as I have planned and cutting my load down almost

one-half. Precious things, I cast aside. No time now for sentiment. Figures loom at the door: Bradford, Coyle, and one of the drivers.

"We'll go down," says Bill Bradford nervously. "Can't you cut that load any more, fella? This isn't an air liner. Can't do only so much. . . . And we got to hustle. The moon's up pretty high."

A quick grip of the General's hand. A world of unspoken words in that transient grasp. Only a few spoken, simply, unaffectedly.

"Be seein' you," he says.

And I was stumbling under my load after Lefty as he moved down the jungle-side trail toward the motor pool at the edge of the banana grove.

I turn for one last look. And stand fascinated.

The moon's poor light, coming over the bay at just the most effective angle, traces the entire length of two pale, slender, towering jungle trees. At their bases, exactly spaced between the two, squats our little bamboo shack, small, insignificant, lop-eared, but —home. No light shines from it. But I know that a pair of eyes, sunk deep under their brows, somberly watch us going away. My own eyes feel hot. I blink. . . . And at that moment I all but crash to the earth with my full load of dangling accouterment as my foot catches on a jungle root. From the flat little shack squatting at the base of those endlessly tall trees, comes just the hint of a chuckle. Yes, he's watching all right!

Fifty yards farther on, a dark shape looms. The car, battered and dust-packed. Quickly we tumble in. But the motor will not start. Refractory at this critical time, and we are late already! Every minute counts. A late start means that we shall be over enemy territory when the pitiless dawn breaks.

Then it catches. And at a pace that defies concentration on anything except avoiding a fatal collision with looming jungle trees, we snake our way swiftly down and bounce out onto the air-field, barely missing an invective-choked officer who fears for his field-marker lighting installation, and almost loses his life protecting it against our onslaught.

Two shapes resolve themselves. No, three. One is composed of waiting officers and Air Corps personnel. One is a training airplane, an ancient PT saved from the wreckage of the Philippine

Air Corps. Our people use it at night to get in practice flights. The other is our Bellanca, looking woefully small, fragile, and entirely inadequate—even to carry the pile of baggage and mail alone that is stacked beside her, not to mention five passengers and our baggage—Lefty's and mine, and that of Major Coyle. Lefty takes one look and, without a word, chucks his beloved bedroll into the car's front seat. Even then the weight is too much.

"Well, we can take this baggage or we can take parachutes," barks Bill Bradford. "She isn't an air liner, fella."

We look at each other.

"And it's gotta be quick." Bill's voice clearly betrays the strain he is under.

Well, it *is* an unenviable responsibility, to say nothing of his own life. Ed Dyess is peering at me.

"It isn't my flight," he says softly, "but . . ."

"But what, Ed?"

"Well, it'd be parachutes for me. Baggage won't do you any good if you've got to bail out because a Nip has caught up with you."

"Yeah. . . . Yeah."

"Well?" snaps Bill.

"I'll take my bag," I decided. "I just don't know any better." And I start for the plane with my two back packs, camera cases, field glasses, and typewriter.

"Good enough for me," grunts Lefty, and follows me.

Out come the parachutes. They make puffs of dust in the pale light as they hit the earth surface of the field. I cast another glance at Ed Dyess. I see him grinning. I also see his little hunch of resignation. I swallow. For a moment we are looking into each other's eyes. I am leaving; Ed Dyess remains here. . . . I do not know then that, long after the Japanese have taken over, Ed Dyess will make his own way out—to Australia, and to the United States; that he will see his own home long before I'll ever see mine. Even if I knew that, I wouldn't know what to say to him. . . . Nor do I know how this great flier will meet his end: that late in 1943, in California, he will arc through the sky in a P-38 that has somehow burst into flames, and will end all his flights there, against the

steeple of a Roman Catholic church. . . . No; if I knew that, I surely would not know what to say. . . . It is just as well that we know nothing at all about the future. . . . And there, in that last moment on Bataan, the immediate present was enough for both of us.

I get into the tiny cabin, already stuffed with men and accouterment. The door slams. I stare at it. That is such a final sound. The cabin begins to sway in a peculiar manner. Outside the right cabin windows two figures rock grotesquely. Comes a slowly mounting whine. Sure. I'd all but forgotten those old wind-up type motor starters.

"Contact!" comes muffled through the glass, and the figures drop away.

"Contact!" bellows Bill, and he engages the engine.

The propeller jerks around once, again, and slowly again—but does not catch.

Again the figures and the whine. I glance at my watch, and my hair tingles: 3:46 A.M.! And we had set 3:30 as the maximum lateness! This will bring us over hostile Mindoro or Panay at dawn.

"Contact!"

Over, and over. . . . Again. No go!

Bill's splitting oath has a peculiar effect. It makes us laugh. But . . .

Three-forty-nine!

"Contact!"

The cabin lights with blue flame. The little ship trembles as the motor catches and roars into life. Once, twice Bill guns her. And then, suddenly, my Bataan buddies are receding into the night back of us. They are gone . . . We are moving. We have started! The end . . .

The motor hammers. Never a miss despite the fact that there was no warm-up. Didn't dare that. Sitting there for a warm-up would be to invite the enemy over from Manila to blast us off the ground.

The black earth rushes under us with gathering speed. It is smooth. They'd done a good job building that field. And kept it

right with endless watering and treatment under the burning tropical sun and twenty-seven bombings in thirty-one days.

A tiny green light whips back in the darkness. And another. The dimmed marker lights. Ahead, the moon cuts a path across the bay. The bay . . . Immediately in front of us. Will she lift? Will she?

The tail comes up with a jerk, so different from the sluggish rise of the bombers. Then her dangling wheels bounce once—twice . . . And for the first time since December 25, I have actually broken contact with the reddish, claylike soil of Bataan.

Slowly we climb. The gallant old veteran is doing a splendid job. And into my mind flashes the title of a book. I see myself slouched in a comfortable chair in the library of Purdue University long ages ago reading it: *Sagittarius Rising* . . .

Below, the ragged coast line slips tailward. Paralleling it closely, empty now, the narrow pale white line of the road, the very one along which we had labored that stifling afternoon long, long ago. Familiar landmarks—unfamiliar from this angle. A blackened patch of seared palm trees. Cabcaben barrio, where phosphorus-filled bombs had smashed and seared one hundred and twenty-three native men and women and children into eternity a few days ago. . . . The bend in the road. Where Lefty had so narrowly escaped the same fate on Friday the 13th. Beyond that, the well hidden Base Hospital. And somewhere in that rising black mound, Little Baguio, where so many of my comrades sleep in their shelters . . .

I am brought back to the immediate present by shouts up front. Bill is pointing. We crane. Yes, I see it. A long, arrowlike hull, silent and motionless in the shimmering bay, a thousand feet below. Some sort of Japanese craft sneaking over from Manila.

What will she do?

We don't have enough altitude to dodge even a rifle shot if she should take a notion to open up on us. . . .

She is lost astern.

Evidently she has no desire to reveal her position to the black bulk of Corregidor on our right by firing even a single shot. That settles it. She is an enemy. Queer craft, that. No doubt something they have salvaged from the hulks we sank at the mouth of the

Pasig. But what is she up to? Taking the measurement of some intended target on Bataan? Or smuggling? We don't know. We're only glad she doesn't throw slugs at us. We are a dead easy, cold-turkey target ourselves.

Bill veers away toward the Cavite shore. He has no desire to annoy the antiaircraft people on Corregidor. Certainly, they have been warned. But they are men of nervous trigger fingers and uncertain temper. It is their business to shoot down airplanes. And at night . . . Well, it may be a Jap. And one burst from them, and . . .

We veer some more. Better risk the enemy batteries over Ternate and Cavite. There, that's enough. We're in luck. The wind is off the Manila coast. It carries our sound away from Cavite. The searchlight battery has not heard us. Otherwise, surely, they would pick us up and hold us in pitiless glare until either their own antiaircraft guns open on us, or some fighter has time to get off the ground and take us under fire.

Rapidly the black waters of the bay slip by. We strain our eyes, equally wary of friend and foe. Corregidor's bulbous tadpole swims away from us in the western bay. And still no slash of fire to announce a battery breaking into action. Far off to the left, the curving Manila water front gives us our last glimpse of that fateful city that was our home for so many hot, humid, but interesting months. No hint of lights from the vicinity of Nichols Field, or Nielson: once friendly havens to us; now hives of little active men who would cut us out of the sky if they had the faintest opportunity. If they've taken off, we'll not know it until they open with a burst through the heart of our fragile little craft.

Now the Ternate shore moves silently under us. So far, so good. We take the first full breath since—well, when?

Bill is pointing again. Lefty turns and bellows in my ear:  
"There's that light on Lubang Island."

Yes, there it is. The nervy little monkeys! Secure in their dominance of the air, they'd converted the lighthouse on Lubang into an air beacon to assist their war planes winging southward to the Java battle. It winks now in regular succession. They've heard our motor. Believing us to be one of their own planes,

they've given us a bearing. But even as we look, it cuts out. Have they received intelligence that we are not friendly? We devoutly hope not. But the suspicion is disquieting.

And well founded, too. Hardly are the first lengths of Mindoro slipping beneath us when the first signal fires spring up. Ahead they spark into life. As rapidly as we leave one behind, the next one is alight still farther ahead.

Then there are other lights: tiny licking flames that squint and are gone. I feel the Bellanca labor to new altitude. Those flashes are from small-caliber guns. Probably rifles . . .

The air grows bumpy. We reel and toss. And ever below us the little lights spit out, and we know that lead slugs are whining through the night. It will take only one lucky slug—or unlucky.

On we fly.

But, as we progress, so always do the signal fires. And so do the pin points that tell of hostile guns.

An hour goes by. And part of the next.

Suddenly Bill banks and peels away. In the black mass below has appeared the steady winking of some automatic weapon directed against us. We must duck that! Powerful medicine. Minute by minute we wait for that ripping stream of steel jackets. Then we breathe easier. We are well out of range. He probably is shooting blind, anyway—at the sound of our motor in the vast dark sky. And then, with profound relief, we see the southernmost coast line of Mindoro recede.

Only a few days ago there had been one of our fields on that southern tip. San José. It had served us well more than once. Some fifty thousand gallons of precious aviation gasoline had been concealed there. Little protection existed—only an officer and fifty men who, day by day, looked ever more anxiously seaward and skyward. Several times Japanese observation, fighters, and even bombers had appeared overhead, swooping suspiciously. Probably reporting. Any day it might come. They had planned for it. If obviously outnumbered, they would burn the fuel to prevent it from capture by the enemy—he needed it almost as badly as we did ourselves—and then filter rapidly along jungle trails into the hills. And then one day it *had* come. A lean, gray marauder of a destroyer.

In a wink it had driven away the crew of a small coastal steamer bearing sorely needed supplies to Bataan. Then the anxious beholders on shore saw her turn toward them. There was no time to be lost. Great clouds of flame-shot smoke leaped high into the air. The little company had made for the hills, where from a high vantage point they'd seen the Japanese destroyer disappearing over the horizon with its prize. It never had landed a beach party—never had intended to, apparently.

The island of Panay now. And never a moment that we do not peer intently through the slowly lightening sky. Nor has any goldfish in his bowl ever felt more exposed to every eye in the world than we as the sun in an immense pool of red-golden radiance lifts itself into the heavens. Off to the northeast we know the Japanese morning patrol is setting off from Legaspi. It will be pull and squeeze. We have a start, but he has twice the speed. And we must have time to get under cover at Iloilo.

A long range of blue mountains on our right. Swiftly we lose altitude. Down, down . . . And we streak along a seven-thousand-foot field at Santa Barbara.

A signal from an automobile that dashes up and races ahead of us as we coast to stop. Quickly we gun the engine and taxi after him. Then slowly, and with great skill, Bill Bradford takes her in across half-cleared rice paddy fields, and straight into a prepared revetment covered by a huge tree.

Scores of Filipinos stand by to aid as the Bellanca is pushed tail first into the revetment. In a moment, trees appear in front of her. Portable banana trees planted in boxes moved by a dozen boys. Then we scatter into the cover.

And not a moment too soon.

From the northeast comes a rising staccato we know so well—a Japanese 97. He's been advised by radio of the passage of a hostile craft. He'll comb that field.

Anxiously we peer at the reveted area. No, he'll be good to see that. But he tries. Repeatedly he swings in low, defying machine guns. We can see his own guns. One glance of our Bellanca in its concealment, and he'd rake her beyond salvage. . . . But he doesn't. . . . Reluctantly he wings over and goes off to the northward.

That was too close! We dare not venture out again until near dusk. Then we'll make a dash, wave-top high, across the waters off Negros and cut across Iligan Bay to Mindanao and our hidden fields on the Great Del Monte Pineapple plantation.

And we do—wave-high, to prevent land observers from detecting us and calling up a Japanese patrol to cut us down in mid-dash. It works, and as the sun we so anxiously saw rise that morning sinks behind the blue Mindanao mountains, we touch wheels to earth and roll to a stop.

We've done it! We're free . . . ! Or—well, practically! The Japanese are no longer just a few miles up there. They're in Davao, some eighty miles. And that—pft! What's that!

## *Mindanao Wonderland*

A rebirth—an amazing, unbelievable rebirth sharp with colors, life, beauty and rich in all things—that-were. Each moment of it, an Alice in Wonderland experience. These things refuse to be real until we stare at them and feel them. Tables, great heavy carved tables; napkins, gleaming silver, iced butter, fruit juice, luscious meat, potatoes, cakes—pineapple juice.

We are the guests of Lieutenant Colonel Elsmore, a fine individual, industrious, brainy. He and General George were associated back in the pioneer days of the Transcontinental Air Mail. A true gentleman, his hospitality is exceeded only by his sincerity. Today, after an unbelievable breakfast (of which Lefty and I took two of everything), we visited General Sharp of the Mindanao command in his underground headquarters, completely camouflaged by plantings and available only to those who knew the way in. We had a long talk. He advised me that he had been instructed by radio from Corregidor to prepare for important visitors. His guess was as good as mine, but I am beginning to have very definite guesses!

Then, several miles away, in an abandoned pineapple sterilizer plant and bodega, Air Base headquarters was inspected, and again, although there were dozens of officers and men in the locality, not

one trail, visible from the air, gave away the location of the busy place. Radio antennae were perfectly camouflaged.

We visited the near-by airfields, too. The planning and labors of the people here have been prodigious. They have made numerous excellent fields, have installed important operations underground. Deep into the side of one hill, tiny human beings had clawed and fought with the hard stone heart of it to fashion something that surely will cause General George's eyes to shine in joy when he sees it—a complete underground revetment. They lack all kinds of essential equipment. They had literally fashioned this with their bare hands—proving again what can be done when men's hearts are in their work, and their leadership is good.

The nights—the delicious soft nights, blue-black and unmoving, yet pulsingly alive. The thrown powder of the stars, clean, close. . . . God is near. God is near. . . .

Surely only in Hawaii have I experienced nights to compare with the whispering beauty of these on Mindanao.

A new day brought our General, and once again the three of us were reunited. But he was not the only one, for I have seen General MacArthur and his family, General Sutherland, General Casey, General Marquat, General Akin, General Marshall, Colonel Stivers, Colonel Willoughby, Captain Ray of the Navy, Colonel Wilson, Lieutenant Colonel Morhouse, Lieutenant Colonel Sherr, Lieutenant Colonel Diller, Captain McMicking—and I understand there are more. General MacArthur and party live in a house next to ours.

A tremendous experience for them all. Rougher than a rodeo—this thrilling dash from Corregidor in Bulkley's cantankerous P.T. boats, mosquito boats really.

"I'll take mine in the air!" exclaimed the General. "But I'd like to take Bulkley. He's good!"

General George told me: the party was destined for Australia. Yes, he too. Again he reiterated his insistence that, wherever he went, I too must go. He explained that B-17's were being dispatched northward from Australia to pick up the party.

"I will speak to the Chief of Staff about your coming down with me," he said. "I don't want to take a chance on leaving you here."

You must come with me, and together we will turn every effort to the relief of those we left up there. It will be an unhappy day for Tojo when he discovers that General MacArthur and his staff are no longer bottled up, but free again to organize for the day when we strike north with a force that will shake him to his knees."

In the midst of our joy of release and reunion we fall silent, overcome by despair. Pilots coming up from the south tell of a wild horse of a P-40 pilot, a squadron leader who could not be restrained and fought the Japanese to a standstill over Java. Then one day, just a few weeks ago, this pilot, promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel in recognition of his outstanding leadership, was missing over Bali. They never found him.

His name was Bud Sprague. . . .

Slowly our small car labors up the steepish incline which lifts the serpentine road from the beaches to the upland plateau of the Cagayan. A crouching figure with a rifle suddenly appears in the restricted field of our blackout headlights. He has been advised of our coming and does not halt us.

Backward, the broad, black carpet of the coconut palms covers the beach area and stretches far off through the soft night to the northwest and the series of headlands we have negotiated that day. Beyond the coconut palms, where hundreds of small brown men peer out to the sea beyond and wait back of their not too numerous lines of barbed wire for the enemy who one day surely will come again, lies the lighter sweep of Iligan Bay.

The vast fling of stars gives pale outline to the tropical panorama, yet ignores the smaller, sometimes uglier, details put to sleep by the night. Gone from sight are the tangles of wire and the squatting, low-browed enclosures from which the snout of the machine gun points in ready threat. Lost are the clusters of stubby posts growing, stout and unyielding, from the very surface of the highway itself—the tank traps. Only a knowledge of the maze will enable a vehicle driver to pilot his car through them. Nor do the undisturbed waters of the bay reveal the rusting hulls and burnt-out

superstructures of the two small interisland steamers lying at crazy, half-drowned angles off the pineapple cannery wharf. Dive bombers, hawking through the skies, caught them there one day, and flames and splinters leaped from them. Again and again they shuddered to the blows until their riddled hulls settled to the shallow bottom.

We feel the air grow crisper. The moist heat of the jungles fades as we mount higher onto the plateau. Now we shoot out onto the high, flat country, cupped about by the distant saw-tooth Mindanao ranges. Points of light grow and fade at intervals around the entire compass. Some rise into momentary brilliance, and the reddish pulse beats against the clouds above: fires, set by natives to clear the land and left to burn themselves out in the highlands.

The raucous blast of a motor horn startles us, for the traffic has been almost nothing on this night phase of our trip. A military car, pale with accumulated road dust, hammers past, hurling most of the loose-surface road in our faces.

"What's his hurry?" grunts the driver to himself, twirling up the window at his elbow.

Vaguely we wonder. This has been a quiet front. And we've just come from the possible invasion area. All was quiet enough there. Still . . .

Another blast. Another hammering car, and another cyclone of dust.

Well, now! Just what does this mean?

And then a sudden application of the brakes throws us forward.

Shadowy figures ahead. One waves us down. On his arm is the blue and white of a military policeman.

"Take it slow!" he barks into the window. "Out with your lights."

We blink as the driver complies and moves forward cautiously. A dozen possible explanations crowd on our minds. But the immediate business of feeling our way along the pale outline of the road occupies all of us.

A quick stop. Another policeman. He peers into our car. His eyes, accustomed to the dark, take quick inventory. Satisfied, he waves us on, but points ahead. Looming darkly to the left are

trucks canted sharply because their off-side wheels are in the ditch. Another stop, and we crawl carefully along the front of a double rank of men, all fully armed with rifles and sidearms and complete with battle packs and helmets.

At last we approach the gate to the lane leading to the plantation compound which has been our secret home during these days and nights of hide-out since our escape from Bataan. Our wonderment is intensified, for instead of the usual single sentry there now are four. And their rifles are businesslike and grim. Another searching examination of the interior of our car.

"And remember, no lights of any kind," his low voice orders as we get into motion.

Twice we pause and edge past vehicles on this narrower road. And then the dark, tree-shadowed area of the compound. Subdued lights can be made out all around the circle of houses. But otherwise it is intensely dark, and not until we alight do we realize that the compound is alive with men and vehicles. A pale blue light winks immediately before us.

"General George?" a voice queries.

"Yes," replies my chief.

"This is the night," says the voice. "The B-17's will be in almost at once, and the orders are for immediate departure. The Chief of Staff desires to see you, sir."

My heart gives a jump. We might have imagined something like that. But instead each of us harbored notions of a night action by the enemy and preparation to meet it.

As if to bear out our informant's statement, the night suddenly bears a new sound: far off to the north we hear the multiple beat of a heavy bomber's engines. The pilot has gone past the landing-field valley and north to the Iligan to get his bearings, and now he is coming in between us and the stars to find his way to the secret field only a few miles away.

There are anxious moments as the huge, unseen bird above seeks to identify his exact position. Slowly we hear him taper off to the southward. And then, following a muffled roar of his engines as he taxis to position, silence.

One in! How many more will come? Four were requested. Probably at least three will arrive. Yes, the second is above.

The night is filled with the throbbing of motors—truck and car engines this time. Personnel and baggage. General MacArthur's party is numerous, since many of his staff of veteran experts are to be transported to Australia, there to carry on the war against the invader.

So much to arrange, and so little time in which to arrange it. General George has a tremendous responsibility. Upon him and the bomber crews, already wearied by the exhausting journey from Melbourne, depends what well may be the successful issue of this war. Cars are slipping away into the darkness toward the gate and the field. I am uneasy. There is no third bomber. Two cannot take the full load. Someone will have to remain here. But maybe it will come in yet. I am ordered to get my pack together and go to the field.

Again the car. And now, as we move slowly along, we find the road spiked every few yards by a helmeted figure. In the gloom we see him snap his rifle to attention. General Sharp of the Mindanao forces is leaving nothing to chance. Our enemy would pay any price for knowledge of this golden opportunity, probably his last, to seize the men who offered the hard-pushed allies their one big hope of leadership in effecting a smashing comeback. No, definitely, this is not the night for practical jokes, or sluggish response to the challenge of these night-guarding sentries. All the way to the field this prevails.

In the dark, the only indications of the presence of two huge bombers are the intermittent blinkings from shadowed flashlights, and two tiny red spots—indicator lights in the pilots' compartments of these towering land battleships. In the darkness they look truly monstrous. Surely these massive things cannot rise from the earth which now bears them!

Around them on every hand move diminutive shadows like flitting gnomes. Trucks are feeding their loads into the long, tapering bodies of the bombers. In front, heavy refueling tankers whine new life into the capacious wing tanks.

An escort car halts on the turn alongside. Back of it are the

outlines of others. The Commander's party has arrived. With neatness and organized plan, the party is stowed aboard. The crew files up.

I swallow. The sky brings no third ship.

"He had a bad oil leak; never left Australia," explains a co-pilot. I can see General George's face in the dim light of a shaded fixture on the ceiling of the machine-gun compartment near us. My foot actually is on the ladder. But I know it will not go farther.

"You are the only one I can ask to do this." The General's voice is strained and he grips my arm. "We can't take any of the baggage, and one officer must remain here."

My mouth is dry. I have the conviction that separation now means a long period of playing solo until we are reunited.

"I understand."

"The third ship will come up in a few days. My word on it. Goodbye . . ."

Again that quick grip. And he is aboard. We never devote time to partings.

Nor do I wait for the take-off. As my driver slowly retraces the way along the black road to the compound, I hear the diminishing thunder of their departure.

They'll be raising the Southern Cross in a few hours. . . .

### *And the Next Day . . .*

Tall, gaunt, fair-haired, and old for his score-plus of years, Pilot Jack Adams assures me that there is a very ample load, but not a dangerous overload. Twenty-one men and all baggage, plus the baggage which had to be jettisoned from the two other 17's carrying General MacArthur and party south the night before. No, not dangerous, but unquestionably uncomfortable. From the tiny cubby of the tail gunner to the glass-cased nose, the big bomber is an unbroken mass of men and baggage. We're carrying no bombs. Special bomb-bay fuel tanks utilize the space. It's a long haul, even direct. And we do not fly direct. Once friendly, the former Dutch base at Amboina now is the homing loft for Jap-

anese bombers and interceptors. We'll give it a wide, fuel-consuming berth.

Clambering over flying bags, web belts heavy with spare rounds and sidearms, canteens, jungle knives, and flashlights, over pineapples snatched from the roadside plantations just a few minutes before, over wool-lined flying jackets, ammunition cases, and a welter of other accouterment, we work forward past the radio compartment neatly stowed with more baggage (maps and records) from Corregidor.

"You're the senior officer," Adams tells me. "You rate the 'bed.'" He grins and points to an open trapdoor beneath the instrument-spattered pilot's compartment. "Down it is."

The "bed" is not unfamiliar to me. General Brereton compensated for interrupted repose on our trip down in November by seeing to it that he was sealed down in the tiny escape bay served by an emergency door in the bomber's belly, which also is a passageway between the bomb bay and the navigating and bombardier compartment in the nose. The little bay is perhaps three feet high by four wide by six long. Now, this would appear capacious enough, were it not for the fact that any occupant is under the necessity of sharing his quarters with a very considerable aggregation of objects whose existence there and proper functioning have a most vital bearing on our ability to sustain ourselves in flight—indeed, to rise at all. So, uncompromising as some of these objects are in their inconsiderate use of space, we make the immediate decision to adjust our own bodies to their unyielding contours.

Oh, yes, there are more than one of us. Three men will make this their home for the next twenty-four hours. We have two blankets among us. I do not anticipate the night hours. Altitude flying is cold business. And we are in tropical cottons. It is, then, with an eye to the future hours that we dispose ourselves with maximum regard for mutual heating and minimum for the dignity of our positions.

The much-riveted aluminum door folds above our heads and snaps into locked position. In the light of a single pale fixture buried in the forward bulkhead, we take stock. Definitely no place for a claustrophobe, I reflect, for the trapdoor is hardly more than just

above our noses. Crowding us from every side are spare oxygen tanks, hydraulic fluid reservoirs for supplying the sturdy landing gear, spare octants, and whole trunks of communications and other electrical lines, the nerve fibers of the great ship. Covering very definitely the area between my third and fifth left ribs is the end of one of a series of perforated cages containing electrical voltage regulators. The cages were not planned to accommodate themselves to my ribs. I reflect morosely that there is not sufficient flexibility in the anatomical rib cage, either.

Comes the whine we know well. The engine starters.

At once our tiny compartment hammers to the exhaust of the port inboard engine and the beating of its air screw. And then the starboard inboard. Our ears flutter painfully. Still another, and finally the fourth engine—these, the outboards.

Adams is nursing the throttles and mixtures, watching the while the mounting cylinder-head and oil temperatures. He'll crowd it. The sound of the engines will betray us to any Japanese patrols that may have set out from Davao upon advice of the northward flight.

Now we taxi; already we are at the far end of the field, more than a mile long. We can feel the swing into position. My heart is hammering. Any moment now, we'll be quitting the Philippines! The brakes lock. First one engine and then the other is revved up to maximum manifold pressure. Apparently Adams is satisfied. The brakes slip off and we feel the rolling bumps.

We are off . . . ! It is 10:30, almost to the second.

Faster, faster we roll. Will she rise? Three-quarters of the field must have gone, and the tail has not come up. . . . In my mind's eye I see the fence at the far end, the stones beyond that . . .

Then the tail does rise, sluggishly, but surely. The jolting ceases.

We have left Philippine soil.

The motors slacken off. We sense the wide turn as Adams heads her into the south.

Already the temperature is something different. We huddle together and try to compress ourselves so that the blankets will cover the greatest accordion-pleated area. And then, to my pleasure, I

discover that the law of compensation has gone into action. That rib-piercing voltage regulator cage is a blessing in metallic disguise. The regulator coils heat as the current flows through them. I'm literally embracing a series of electric heaters!

The time passes surprisingly fast. The senses are lulled by the monotonous, rolling rhythm of the four engines, beating in slow cycles of synchronism. Sleep as such does not come, but a kind of twilight anesthesia is a pleasant euphoric substitute; and it is with surprise that, as the felt curtain into the nose is lowered and a man clammers into our already overcrowded compartment, we note that daylight is graying the glass nose. Outlined sharply are the figures of the forward gunner and a navigator as they peer into the dawn, alert for enemy interceptors. Through a crack in the emergency door, I see tiny whitecaps standing on a motionless blue-black sea, far below.

In two hours more we are whooping along the runway of a secret field in northern Australia. Stiff, not too bright in the heads, and vastly relieved, we alight. I have been here before. It is not much changed—the reddish soil, the stunted trees, the whipping, dry heat. . . . Yes, I have been here before. I am fated to be here again, not too far in the future, and to experience here the most tragic chapter of any in the story that started back there at Selfridge Field.

But mercifully I know nothing of this. I am glad to be here; impatient to be off again to Melbourne—on what is to be a never-to-be-forgotten ride with death on the wing. . . .

#### Australian paradox.

Australia. . . . On Bataan's enemy-girt ruggedness this island continent was only a blob on our maps, a far, unavailable country tinted with Britain's habitual pink—or, at any rate, the map publisher's habitual selection of color to indicate a part and parcel of Britain's Commonwealth of Nations. From Bataan, this remote land was truly a haven. But then, so were the stars, if we had but had a way to reach them. From Mindanao, Australia was a distinct and thrilling possibility. It was only an overnight hop in a Flying Fortress. And now, from the observation nose of one of those same

Flying Fortresses, Australia is a vast, flat waste of pale red, pock-marked endlessly with stunted, starved trees.

This is the great interior, a vast and terrifying desert where a forced landing would have meant almost certain disaster through inexorable thirst and starvation. Pale flood washes from which the water drained into nothingness almost as soon as it fell. Great reaches of sand tinted the same burned color as the cartographer's unwitting representation. On and on, it stretches until its sullen sterility is lost in the tired horizon. Then slowly coming into range are huge circular sinks, spongy with darkish swamp growth. Mulga. And occasionally an outcropping of sandstone lifting through the deadly surface, but in itself only an anemic, discouraged effort. Scattered here and there without plan or reason, and totally unaccompanied by such enriching accessories as trees and lower foliage, are small, circular, lead-colored ponds of water, thick and, at this height, seemingly not even wet.

I have found a spot against the cold starboard wall frame in the nose. Against the opposite wall is the navigator's table. It is littered with maps; navigation strip maps they should have been.

But they are not.

One simply is a large-scale hydrographic map. Another is a pocket map of Australia. And a third is a folding air-lines outline map of the island continent. Not one of the lot is a fit guide for navigation.

Red-eyed and twitching is our navigator, a lanky, big-elbowed chap with a pimply neck and a much-traveled shirt which is indifferently and never fully tucked into much-traveled slacks. He seizes his celluloid triangle, and a black pencil line crawls over a good half of the map distance to Melbourne. We sigh with mingled patience and relief. It's still something like a thousand miles. From a hook he takes a microphone. Above us the pilot "kicks her over" a few degrees. The navigator clammers across to my side of the ship and peers down into a pedestallike instrument. Through the eyepiece he can see the reddish earth slipping past to the measurement of hair lines built into the tube. A quick reading, and two presses of the microphone button. The big bomber heels over

slowly on a course a few degrees to the former one. Another reading, and another signal. Lazily the 17 heels again, and this time resumes her original course.

Now some pencil and paper work, manipulations on a log-log slide rule, and a final call on the microphone. By watching a point on the distant horizon I can note a slight change in the course. Our navigator, using the drift indicator, has made a correction. I note with annoyance that apparently the winds aloft are increasing—dead in our faces. That will mean a delayed arrival.

Somewhat the long afternoon hours slip by. Before the sun drops too low, the navigator, now given a hand by two assistants, takes several more drift indication readings. Pencils are busy; conferences frequent, and increasingly intent.

"We'll just have to wait for a star observation," I hear one of them say.

That decides me. I make inquiry.

"We think we're a little off the course," explains the red-eyed youth, now twitching more than ever. He has been continuously at this job for more than thirty hours. "A star sight will give us a true fix."

"Winds?" I ask.

He nods. "Heavy headwind, sir. It's already put us behind some two hours. Be worse'n that if it keeps up. Won't be in now until around midnight."

I groan. Every added hour is an eternity. Then another thought.

"But what about fuel supply?"

There's a little tingling about my temples as he answers.

"Pilot's fussing about that," he says with a grim twist to his smile. "Too late now to hit for any other field. Got to make for Melbourne, or else . . ."

I settle in my cold corner, now colder than at any other time, it seems. There is a hint of dryness in my mouth. Oh, well, no point in borrowing trouble. Besides, we reflect with just a touch of grimness, this is Australia, where everything's going to be all right. This is Australia where there are no more dive bombers, no more strafers, no more snipers. And everything's safe and . . .

Slowly daylight fades. Steadily the motors grind their tireless

roar against our ears. I peer out of the observation window on the starboard side. The great air screws describe twin circular blurs against the darkening sky. Seen from the oblique, the blurs overlap. And where they do, they are laced with slow, pulsing shadow travel, now broad and almost stationary, now narrow and faster. Except for the short rest for refueling, they've been blurring and beating that way continuously for more than twenty hours—not to speak of the equally long up trip. I swallow. With every revolution of those whipping air screws our precious supply of fuel drains lower and lower in the capacious tanks. I am aware of the decreased tempo. Pilot Adams has dropped them to their most economical cruising speed to extract every ounce of efficiency from them. But, of course, that cuts our air speed, too, which already has been sliced by the unending opposition of the winds aloft.

There is a stir in our cramped little world. The lid of a green wooden box pops open. A queer, semicircular instrument makes its appearance. This is a special night-reading octant. The navigator has picked a star, and through the transparent roof panel he is sighting his instrument.

But something is not right. Several times he attempts a sight—and each time irritably adjusts the instrument and tries again. At last he unscrews a small cap and removes a battery. Another stir for our cramped muscles as we try to locate a case with spare batteries. A replacement battery goes in. But, alas, not a fresh one. Someone has failed to stock fresh batteries—just put the exhausted ones back into the case. It's so typical of the maintenance of these overworked bombers.

Another octant is called for. And by the gods! If this one also isn't exhausted! Without ado I unscrew the cap of my flashlight. I've always been a crank about flashlights. Plenty of them and *right!* We load the cells into the octants. The tiny lamps glow. With mingled relief and anger I wait.

But it's not to be. For some reason both night octants are unfit for service. How long they've been that way, no one seems to know. My mind reviews quickly terse dispatches that have announced lost bombers from Lingayen to Mindanao, from Min-

danao to Darwin, from Darwin to Bandoeng. I begin to understand.

What's to be done? Gas supply dwindling to the lower third of the tanks. Head winds. Uncertain course. And no night octants.

"We'll try a day octant."

The navigator's voice is husky as he takes the less sensitive instrument out of its case and sights through the panel.

"Ready," he calls, and a moment later snaps out a reading.

On the floor an assistant is seated with a chronometer. He enters the exact time, then the reading. Eight sets of figures are given. Then the navigator drops into his chair and calculates feverishly. He seizes his map. My jaws tighten. What an infernal mess! At a time when only the best of everything can give us an even chance, we find ourselves paying with our lives and a \$300,000 bomber against junk instruments, an exhausted crew and a wholly inadequate map. No, definitely, it is not the situation Hollywood prefers to portray. If it only *were* a movie . . .

The weary, twitching youth rams his bony fingers through his dirty, tousled hair.

"Won't come out!" he snaps. His voice is high-pitched. "I dunno. . . . I dunno—"

"Listen, son." I am over his shoulder. "Take it easy. You pop right down here on the floor and take a nap. The rest of these chaps will play around with the octants. Come on. Half an hour."

"But we gotta—"

I am very determined. It's our only chance. I point to the floor and grin. For one wild moment he hesitates. Then drops. In two minutes he is so hard asleep that I wonder if he has not fainted. Well, what matter? Unconsciousness is what he needs. He's got it.

Of all the half-hours we've endured, that one is the longest. But even it comes to an end. I shake him. In a moment he is up. The rest has helped his poor, tired brain immensely. The resiliency of youth.

The octant again, and another set of figures. Then a second set. And even a third. The day octant is very unsatisfactory. But three sets will give us some sort of check. He covers a sheet with figures. And plots on the map.

This time the results are more compatible. He snatches them up and works his way through my late "bed" to have a conference with the pilot. Presently he returns. His gray face is grim.

"Gonna be close," he says. "We were off about forty miles as I figure it. That wouldn't be serious except for the head winds and gas. We haven't got gas enough for a forty-mile error. We got to hit it right on the nose."

Whew! No room for a forty-mile error in a trip of nineteen hundred miles! Now, while a 2 per cent error in navigation is not to be tolerated in precision operations, to allow a bomber no more than a 2 per cent safety factor would be tantamount to—well, to just what it has an excellent chance of being: a disaster.

We avoid one another's glances. The word goes quickly around the cold compartment now hemmed in by the press of night. No one speaks. We just stare at different objects, every one of which we've stared at a thousand times in the past twenty hours.

Absurd paradox. But then, all paradoxes are absurd, really, or they wouldn't be paradoxes! From the death-crowded peninsula of Bataan I have come to haven in Australia. Now into my mind there creeps an old familiar feeling. I'd hardly realized that it had been absent—the realization and acceptance of the proximity of death. Strange, too, our easy greeting of that old feeling; no panic, no lamentation—really silly the comfortable way it fits in—yes, comfortable. Like an old friend. Crazy, that. But true.

The beating drone of the engines goes on. Well—so do we. The first shock is over. We're talking again. It's a practical, cool sort of thing now. We don't speak of our chances. That's futile. Each knows that they are slim enough. But we do have a chance. Why crowd it?

#### What about parachutes?

Not so good. There are only half the number we need for all we have aboard. And then, we're so hampered by men and gear that it would be most difficult to quit ship.

No one actually *says* as much. Yet by unspoken agreement, the idea of parachutes is abandoned. The word has been passed throughout the ship, yet no man asks for a parachute. We'll stay with her. If she does make it—well and good. If Adams has to

crash land her—the casualty list will be a bit high, all right. Coming down out of a night sky over absolutely unknown country. No chance to pick and choose. . . . Trees, boulders, buildings, maybe . . .

There is a movement up in the nose. The gunner is pointing. We peer through the transparents.

"Oh, well . . ." grins the gunner.

Outside, the night has grown completely black. The stars are gone.

It is raining.

Truly the cards are stacked against us. Our last opportunity of getting bearings by landmark has gone with the storm.

Repeatedly the radio operator has contacted Melbourne to ask for a radio beam. But there's something amiss on *that*, too. Doesn't quite check. We switch onto the broadcast channels. But with a single exception the stations have closed down and gone off the air. And the single exception is so laced and hammered by the storm that we cannot be sure of her identification. It checks roughly. But we can't tolerate even a slight deviation.

Each posts himself at a window and searches the gray-black riddle outside. Occasionally there is a rift. Water? Yes. No, it can't be. But it is . . . No, just a break in the storm clouds.

Why look? Leave it to those whose training enables them to discriminate. But they are uncertain, too. I can hear them argue the point.

"We ought to be close in now." The navigator's shout is in my ear above the roar of the engines.

"Ought to see some light diffusion in the sky, shouldn't we?"

He shakes his head.

"Brown-out!"

Why, of course. Somehow Australia was a haven of peace and peaceful pursuits. In November when we'd been there, cities were bright with night lights. Of course. . . .

The navigator calls up the pilot on the interphone. He replaces the mike with a grim smile.

"The needles on the gas gauges are bumping the zero pins," he says huskily. But the grin is still there.

We apply ourselves to our individual windows, peering for some clue, some landmark. There is that tightening of the throat again.

No, that can't go on. Little feeling of panic. No. . . .

I close my eyes against the cold glass. I pray. Just as I did in Bataan. Just as I've done every day most of my life. But somehow Bataan has made things different. You don't pray for the things you used to. You don't ask for things for yourself. Or, if you do, they're somehow more objective. I don't pray for my life. I pray for two things:

Courage and dignity.

Courage to wear out the endless minutes before the first outboard engine begins to sputter and cough in strangulation. Dignity to face the results.

I pray quietly and without emotion.

And the panic has ceased clawing within me. I'm all right now.

I stare through the window port. Faintly now I can see the same interlaced pulsing blur of the two starboard propellers. Still strong and steady.

The throat is dry and warm. The hands are cold and damp. How long now . . .

The navigator seizes the mike. He's got a call from the pilot.

"O.K.," he barks. And then in a perfectly matter-of-fact tone he adds to me: "He's gonna take her down through."

The navigator has lost all his jitters. You'd think the pilot was simply tired of flying and had decided to set her down on a perfect runway, all lighted and ready.

So, this was it? And we found ourselves echoing that last phrase of the navigator: "O.K."

The big ship trembles.

And then the world bursts into sudden, inexplicable blinding blue-white light . . .

Explosion?

No. . . . There was no sound.

"Searchlights. . . . Melbourne!"

The gunner's voice is high-pitched and wavering.

Now the twin blurs are clean and sure in the diffused illumina-

tion coming up from the indefinite below, far under the storm clouds.

I'm blinking. I can hardly see. There are hot tears in my eyes. Down my cheeks.

They've picked up the sound of our engines. Pray God for just enough fuel to bring us over the field. . . .

We're going down through the overcast. The lights work us slightly to the right. They go out.

The ghost of the storm slips upward above us. Mistily in the rain we can see the pattern of red lights on the field.

But . . . but what do they mean? Are they parallel to the runway? or at right angles? I've been on this field only once. I can spot a landmark. But it seems to me that Pilot Adams is going in at right angles. Still, he's the pilot; he must do as his judgment dictates.

We drop down sharply. The wing lights flood as much light back into our faces from the rain as they manage to project onto the ground beneath.

"Here he goes—"

My breath stops. The big bomber heels over, straightens up, and cuts down like a swooping hawk.

Then my pent-up breath explodes in a shout. The big machine catches itself and roars into a desperate climb.

Below us a ridge of high trees, then a confusion of small buildings, parked bombers, and open ditches seem to clutch at the belly of the 17 . . . And miss.

My heart is thudding against my ribs. I wait each second for the inevitable engine failure. Surely we don't have enough fuel to straighten out again for another attempt. And we're still lost—right above the airport! Which way in? Those lights tell no story. Does the pilot avoid them, or use them as an in-guide?

Here it comes again . . .

And once more that sickening recovery just short of disaster. We lurch sluggishly and claw for altitude. Our tired, fuel-starved engines bite and hold. . . .

Around once more.

And then it comes. I'm not sure which engine, but one of the outboards hiccupped in jerky hesitation, caught—coughed again. Then roared once more.

"He's got to take her down this time," yelled the navigator.

My eyes are fascinated by the uprushing blur caught in the wing lights. A confusion of the same structures again. The ridge of trees—the serrated gash of an open ditch, apparently only dug, deep and wide—the mottle of a parked Hudson bomber—and another. . . . Down . . . Down . . . The whole thing seemed to be rushing straight into my brain together with the burning fact that we were not on the runway at all. . . .

Bump. . . . Bump. . . . Bu-u-um-m-mp. . . .

The big 17 heels, rights, and seems for all the world to be trying to pitch herself over her own nose.

Innumerable objects whip by in the dazzling field of the wing lights.

Slower . . . Slower . . .

Then a deep, easy settling.

And complete silence.

The engines have died.

In a trice the emergency door is open. We simply tumble out onto the mud beneath the bomber, safe, safe—safe!

Automobile headlights play on us from beyond another broad ditch. Just behind is silhouetted the sturdy bulk of a huge construction machine of some type.

"We can't drive over to you," shouts a voice from the headlights. "How many killed?"

"None!" we roar in unison. "How do we get outa here?"

There is a moment's hesitation from the lights.

"How many hurt?"

"None! . . . How th' hell . . ."

"You crashed, didn't you?"

"No! How th'—"

"Y're nuts. And how do *we* know how you get out? What's the idea of landing over here? They're constructing a drainage system out here. Landing strip's back of us."

It is a problem to get out, even for a man—not to speak of a huge twenty-ton airplane with a wing span of one hundred and twenty feet!

The next morning they constructed some sort of ramp to assist the 17 out of its miraculous emergency landing strip. It was towed out. And then incredulous officers applied a steel tape to the turf, two complete patches of which had been ripped from the moment our wheels touched until we came to rest in front of that last big ditch. For fully loaded B-17's, we'd been building landing and take-off fields of not less than six thousand feet and preferably seven thousand feet to give proper safety margin.

From the point where our wheels first ripped and rolled up the turf, to the final point of rest, the total distance was nine hundred and two feet, to the inch!

"I brought her into Pearl Harbor just when hell let loose," commented Pilot Jack Adams. "Had to land her on a field built for peewee training planes. Habit, I guess."

"Yeah?" said another. "But tough on brakes."

And so it was. There's an entry in the training and technical manuals about the excessive use of brakes.

Must speak to Jack Adams about that.

Some day.

I bet.

### *Australian Sequence*

How to begin! How even to accommodate my mind—flexible as it must be in war's kaleidoscope to new changes, new situations—to one which includes among its long-lost furnishings the unbelievable renewal of communication with my family, even thinking of them in direct intimate terms . . .

A strange, intoxicating freedom is this, allowing the mind and body to indulge in things of the past: tables laden with rich fare, soft beds, lighted streets, theaters—home, and the forms and faces of those who were part of it. We haven't dared do that for months. Only slightly more devastating than the actual impact of an enemy

bullet or the roaring smash of one of his bombs was the effect of dwelling on such mental pictures. One's morale dissolved . . .

So tremendously substantial, so completely isolated from the enemy was this new world of ours that, with a complete and inclusive suddenness, the war became unreal. It was many days before we could appreciate, in even a small degree, the instance and the enormousness of the threat to Australia. General MacArthur had arrived, and the people of Australia had taken him as their own, accepted him unquestioningly as their leader in all things military, and even more. He had come to them in their black hour. How black, only history will reveal. In an unbelievably short time, the confusion and uncertainties of this reestablishment of Headquarters and Command shook itself down into organizational delineations. True, there were lost souls, and bewilderment existed in every man's mind. But there was a forward movement. My general was advised to report to Air Force Headquarters, at least until such time as the policies, liaison functions, and command channels could be reviewed and given form where and as required.

This superimposition of a General Headquarters over all other existing headquarters—American, Australian, the smaller but vital Dutch establishments remaining from land and sea forces of N.E.I.—gave birth to problems as hydra-headed as they were difficult of analysis, to say nothing of solution. It is to the lasting credit of the military and political leaders involved that they set their feet firmly against forces which would dissipate the general forward surge into a series of ineffectual bypasses, serving individual interests but paralyzing the new vitality that was struggling into being. In the Air Force the problem was a double one. On Australia's side of the ledger was a complete staff organization, designed upon the Australian system, of course. But two years of war had already drained equipment and supplies dangerously low. On the American side of the book was an incomplete staff organization, some equipment and promise of much more. Yet, on top of all was the paramount fact that a desperate war was in progress and had to be fought day by day. It was natural, then, that from this should evolve a hybrid staff and operating organization, partly Australian and partly American. At least the Australian organiza-

tion was already functioning—like a merry-go-round already in motion—and we leaped aboard and took up the unoccupied places and doubled up where the horses were already full.

In this naturally confused situation, General George and I found ourselves. Exactly what his assignment would be was a matter of considerable conjecture. Lieutenant General George H. Brett was the senior American officer commanding the Allied Air Forces. Then came Air Vice Marshal W. D. Bostock, as his Chief of Staff. Under this Australian officer came Brigadier General Ralph Royce, heading up what corresponded to two of our staff functions: Intelligence and Operations. Finally it was indicated that General George should fit in as Chief of Air Operations.

Incessantly we worked. His every hour was filled with a driving insistence to smash inefficiency, to be done with words, to demand adequate training for pilots—not only as pilots, but as men capable of projecting and prolonging their lives. His eyes were fixed on a distant goal, the development of a properly equipped, intelligently directed, well trained Air Task Force. Some day he would drive back into the very heart of Japan and strike lightning terror into the evil hearts of those who had unloosed their unrestrained brutality upon the world.

We found Buzz Wagner. Now he was a captain. He had a record here and in Java quite in keeping with the splendid work he had started in the Philippines. But it was a grim picture he gave of their bitter disappointments. Actually they were seated in their P-40's and ready to take off on the first leg of the danger-packed hop that was to terminate on Bataan Field, when they were ordered to cease immediately any further action in that direction and make for Java with all haste. Their protests naturally availed them nothing in the face of highly effective rank. When we arrived, he was preparing a history of the 17th (Provisional) Pursuit Squadron as it carried on here and over the Netherlands East Indies. The General studied him closely. Something in his mind? (Eventually Wagner was given a double promotion and the heavy task of coordinating many of our efforts in the northeast. And still later, he was killed in a plane accident in the United States.)

There was very little bombing equipment available which could

make a Philippine flight. That was one thing. The other was: there was considerable doubt in the minds of some of the ranking officers as to whether there was justification for risking this very limited stock on a project that they frankly believed to be hopeless of true benefits. The point was frankly made that the Philippines were doomed and no one bombing expedition, or many expeditions, could save them. On the other hand, they argued, we might well stand to lose the only squadrons of really serviceable bombers that we could throw into the fight to save Australia and ourselves in Australia.

It was on this highly discouraging note that the General announced his plan to take off at dawn the next morning for a highly necessary inspection of all air installations in the northeast sector from Central Australia north to, and including, Port Moresby. I felt very solemn about the whole thing—I had experienced quite enough flying for the duration; but my indisposition was all to no avail. We used General Brett's famous B-24 (Liberator), piloted by Captain Frank Kurtz. The air was bumpy on the way north, and when we made our first landing I was unhappy. The General confronted me on the landing field after we'd disgorged ourselves from the bomber's capacious belly.

"How'd you like that?" he beamed. "I was co-piloting myself, and I held her nice and steady for you."

"Yes, sir," I said wanly, "you're a good pilot. But why anybody wants to ride in one of these things when he can walk, crawl, or even swim, is more than I can guess."

I excused myself.

What the General found in this area drew hard lines on his face and added a light of fierce determination to his eyes. Lack of co-ordination was understandable, just as it would be in any theater where organization, expansion, operation, supply, training and fighting, all had to be initiated, supported, and continued in one simultaneous movement. General George was with his crony again, General Hugh Casey, and together they observed everything, talked little of anything, but planned much, clearly, wisely, and to the point.

It was while we were on this trip, the two generals in Port

Moresby and I in an advanced station to "sweat in" the first, bewildered squadrons of our P-39's, that news came of the first of the "all front" attacks the Japanese were launching against Bataan and Corregidor, and by April 3rd we knew that the desperate situation I had exactly predicted one month too early, now had developed in all its hopeless intensity for the starved, disease-ridden defenders of the peninsula.

Having rectified half a dozen serious yet stupid situations by means of long-distance telephone calls to headquarters—such as insisting that the vital ground crews for fighter squadrons be assigned to areas in which the fighter squadrons were located, instead of to some base a thousand miles away where there were no fighters—General George gave the order to return to Melbourne in all haste. The drive within him was undeniable, and this time he was rewarded with a decision to equip certain of our bombers with auxiliary tanks sufficient to carry them to the Philippines for a series of raids to originate from one of the southernmost islands. Day and night, we strove to effect the necessary arrangements. His flaying determination exhausted us. His mind burned with a fierce white light.

In refutation of any suspicion that General George's judgment was being eclipsed by his determination to effect an air expedition to the islands, a certain conversation occurring on the 6th of April could be offered. The scene was the polished drawing room of one of Australia's foremost mercantile families, loaned to the government for the housing of certain distinguished guests. The principal participants were President Manuel Quezon of the Philippine Commonwealth—the most recent évacué from the Islands—and General George. Present, also, was Major General Valdez, the President's Chief of Staff.

President Quezon's shrewd, nervous dark eyes flickered over my general in lightning appraisement. Then in quick, staccato phrases, the President put questions calculated to acquaint himself with the plan. Satisfied, he then fired short bursts straight into the heart of his objective: Didn't General George believe much more could be accomplished? Couldn't we make use of more bombers operating out of certain other bases? Was it not desirable to follow a

certain somewhat modified plan for concentrating operations in the Islands? And so on.

There was nothing in this interrogation to justify the slightest suspicion that the President was suggesting a *misuse* of the Air Force, or any departure from policy established by General MacArthur; but he was endeavoring to satisfy himself that everything was being done that reasonably could be expected. At the conclusion of General George's forthright, unequivocal outline of limitations, of operating restrictions, of what constituted a reasonable demand upon existing facilities and personnel in view of the whole picture, there existed no question in the mind of anyone present as to the clearness of conception and integrity of intention of this man whose fundamental honesty was his most rigid task-master.

The time came for actual departure; yet there had been no announcement as to the identity of the leader of the expedition. General MacArthur had ordered the expedition. The choice of a leader lay with General Brett. General Royce was approached, but did not give his answer at once. Then one wet, dark afternoon, the door between his office and General George's opened. General Royce put his head in.

"I have decided to go, George," he announced, and withdrew.

"Yes, sir," came General George's voice from somewhere far within him. Then he jumped to his feet. "Come on! We've got to check to be certain that they have all the necessary maps, and you must prepare a priority list of those whom we want brought back from the Islands in the empty bombers. And remember: Lefty—right up there near the top!"

If this belated extemporaneous bombing expedition, carried out by green crews with imperfect equipment, did not (probably could not) measure up to expectations, bombs and machine guns did account for several enemy vessels and give a stinging rap to ground installations; and it brought us manifold benefits, for each returning bomber was crammed to capacity with men we had been forced to leave on Mindanao. Among them was Lefty—and Ossie Lunde. These and later arrivals coming down by Navy aircraft swelled considerably our little pool of refugees in southern Aus-

tralia who had never expected again to see the outside world. There were Colonel Savage, Colonel Grover, Major Kennard, Major Bill Bradford, Captain Bill Cummings, Captain Jack Caldwell, Captain Joe Moore, Captain Dick Fellows, Lieutenants Walter Putnam, Raymond Gehrig, Andrew Kriger, William Fealock, Davis Obert, John Posten, and Varian White.

And later there arrived the pathetically small group of nurses whose undimmed spirits offered contrast to an outward appearance of sexless bedragglement, attired as they were in dirt-stiffened fliers' coveralls and massive G.I. shoes: Willa Hook, Katherine Acorn, Juanita Redmond, Florence MacDonald (Chief), Una Hatchett, Gwendolyn Lee, Mary Lohr, Dorothy Daley, Ressa Jenkins, and Sue Downey.

But every new hand we clasped made greater and more absolute the void peopled by memories of those who were not included.

"He's—still there," would come the halting phrase. Something we dreaded to hear, while knowing always that it was inevitable. And each time there followed that cold constricting silence, which meant an eternity for someone.

General Wainwright's final appeal for help came through to us as the first week of April went out. He was planning to order the destruction of all vessels which might fall into enemy hands—including the gallant old *Canopus*. Our bombers were unable to make the trip north for some days after that, and by then the hideous sufferings of the exhausted Bataan defenders had come to an end and an armistice had been agreed upon. Deprived of landing fields, none of the bombers could have taken any of the boys away directly from Bataan; those who came out made their exit in the remnants of the "bamboo" fleet, the P-35's which had been brought up from Mindanao, and the few P-40's which had been assembled in Mindanao and flown to Bataan before the collapse.

There followed a succession of dismal days during which even the once friendly Bataan Peninsula turned against Corregidor and served as a rugged foundation for Japanese guns pouring a hail of high explosive onto all parts of the Rock exposed to that direction. From Ternate and Cavite the ring of fire continued, and those parts unranged by hostile guns were pulverized by incessant

bombing, until whole detachments of coast defense units were wiped out in landslides loosened by the impact of continuous blast. The days of that triumphant spot of color I had seen waving steadily in the wind above the old ruins were numbered. Time was rushing fearfully to the last fiery convulsion to mark the greatest military defeat in American history.

Nor was this alleviated in even small part by the truly stirring news of General Doolittle's amazing accomplishment in delivering the first tangible indication of American wrath against Tokyo on April 18, Far Eastern Time.

The utter bleakness of those days must have resulted in something of an anesthesia. We moved as though in unpleasant dreams that would be forgotten with the coming of daylight. I was relieved that the General had found compatibility in the home of new, sincere friends, the J. H. Carew-Reids and the C. P. Ruddicks. Their genuineness, kindness, and fine appreciation of his needs made these bitter days endurable for him and renewed his staunch determination that the hopeless fight of the men of Bataan and Corregidor should not be in vain.

It was during this period, too, that war's turbulent backwash threw together so unexpectedly in southern Australia a number of buffeted évacués from the stricken Malay Peninsula, and particularly Singapore. Fine people, most of them of social position and means, who had been devoting their time more and more to war work of one kind or another, through two years. Their very presence in Australia refuted the stories of Singapore's "social playtimers who enjoyed tea dances even as the enemy was blasting his way across the Causeway onto Singapore Island." They had made incredible escapes through last-minute bombing and shelling of their posts of duty, and finally by devious routes, using harassed vessels of all descriptions, reached Java only to be routed again and made to flee to Australia. They'd lost everything: life savings, homes—dear ones. Yet in Australia most of them fitted themselves quickly into some new war effort, setting their faces against betrayal of their inner despair. I had met many of them during General Claggett's tour of inspection in Malaya the previous July. Among these whom I'd seen at the colorful farewell party for

D. S. S. Douglas of the National City Bank, were Mrs. Arthur Thompson and Miss Rae Moulton, both Americans, Mrs. Keith Johnson, wife of the Superintendent of Malayan Police, Mrs. Robert Burns, whose husband was widely known in accounting circles, and Mrs. H. C. Reilly.

It was in the Reillys' fine home, an architectural gem on the edge of the golf course near R.A.F. headquarters (over which, later, the Japanese infantry swarmed in direct assault), that General Claggett and I had been the dinner guests of Group Captain Darvel in that now far-off day of peace. Mrs. Reilly and her husband had been "on holiday" in Australia at the time. In Malaya her war job was concerned as a cipher expert with Sir Shenton Thomas, governor of the Straits Settlements, and later with Duff Cooper during his mission, which got under way shortly after General Claggett and I departed for N.E.I. From her own lips in Australia, I heard how, as late as December 6, Sir Shenton Thomas had declared to her personally his absolute conviction, "There never will be a Japanese bomb dropped in Singapore—or a Japanese set foot in Malaya." She had no reason to doubt his utter sincerity. Even during the last days, as the Japanese ground troops assaulted R.A.F. headquarters beyond the suburbs and Mrs. Reilly was being warned by a ranking air officer telephoning urgently from her own home to her at Government House that she should under no circumstances attempt to come back, but should flee with what she had on her back, the governor pooh-poohed the whole idea, unable to grasp that Singapore's death knell had indeed sounded—or, if he had grasped it, stoutly refusing to believe in it.

The direction of most needed accomplishment lay to the northwest—the Darwin area—isolated, completely exposed, adjacent to enemy consolidation positions in Timor and the Celebes. Indeed, it was a case of plugging the threatened break in the dike with bare fingers. There was little else, should the flood pressure increase.

Thus it was written in the Big Book that from these conferences should issue the fateful order.

Dated April 22, 1942, Special Orders No. 1, Headquarters, Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Area, in part stated that General George would proceed with the least practicable delay by air-

craft to Darwin for the purpose of "assuming command of all United States Army Air Forces in the Darwin Area."

The same order directed me to report to General George for duty.

What that duty would involve was not settled in the General's mind, except that we should "carry on exactly as we had on Bataan."

From the moment his assignment was made definite, the General was a changed man. This metamorphosis was characterized initially by a furious burst of energy and planning. He was happy. Here was action. He was a man of action. Here was field service. He loved field service. Waves of rank at a main headquarters depressed him. Again he would be with his men fighting a war on a tooth-for-a-tooth basis, only he insisted that it be three-teeth-for-a-tooth basis, "—or you aren't winning this war!"

Apprised of this new assignment, Mel Jacoby quietly proposed to me that he go north with us. I urged him to speak to the General. He did. The General was enthusiastic.

And thus moved one step closer the fate that none could even remotely foresee.

Before our departure, the General was scheduled to speak on a "March of Time" broadcast to the States. The combined persuasion of Mel and myself was barely sufficient to overcome the General's deep-rooted distaste for publicity. Only the reminder that this would be an opportunity for loved ones at home to hear his voice, and that he did have a message to give for the common good, finally gained his reluctant consent.

But through a misunderstanding combined with my own carelessness the broadcast never became a reality, although the microphone was ready and waiting. He refused utterly to allow me to accept the blame. His only thought was that he had disappointed those of his family who had been forewarned by the broadcasting company of the impending program.

This was his message:

It was only a few years ago, but it seems very long ago now, that I remember reading how some of the leading authorities on such matters

were taking exception to what they described as the trend of American youth. It seemed to them that the social structure of our country was about to fall into decay because of a softness, an indifference and a lack of strength of purpose exhibited by the generation coming into its own. Some even suggested doubt as to what the future of the nation might be in the face of such lack of substance and serious intention.

The points they mentioned seemed to be well taken. Just looking around would give anyone food for sober thought, particularly those who were in a position to know that events were shaping themselves in a way to bring about a life-and-death test of the real moral strength of many nations.

Now I look back over the past months on Bataan Peninsula. The pictures are vivid. The actors appearing in them are real. Some are in fox holes at Agloluma Bay. Some are on the front beyond Mount Bataan. Some are across the Channel in Corregidor. Others are in the cockpits of our old, battered P-40's . . . Not all the pictures are grim. But many of them are.

And it was then that these same young men about whom we were concerned a few years ago seemed suddenly to have obtained from somewhere a hardness, a strength of purpose, and a degree of courage that earned them their place alongside the greatest fighters this world has known.

The more adverse the conditions, the greater the danger, the more seemingly hopeless the situation—in exactly just such a mounting proportion did they show these characteristics.

Such strength of purpose, such courage, such refusal to accept defeat are qualities of character impossible to develop in so short a time. They had to be there all the time. They were there all the time.

The typical American youth (and they were the typical from every walk of life and every state in the Union) has been tried again in the hardest game of them all—War—and has not been found wanting.

I feel that if these same men—I will not call them young men any more—had an opportunity of sending back a message to their brothers in the States, it would be something like this:

“Don’t worry, Pal. You have got what it takes. Just take your training seriously, enjoy yourself, and when the time comes, ask, and give, no quarter.”

Came a last flawless Sunday, during which the outward peace was not reflected by my inner feelings, since I had wrestled the

whole day with a problem springing from an offer, most attractive, of assignment with my old branch of the service. Pitted against this was my deep attachment for General George and his seeming genuine need of me, both as an officer and as a companion. At day's end, though, there was no indecision. The belief that my fate was inextricably bound up with his became a conviction that brought with it pride and peace.

And then, our belongings and equipment stowed in the sleek belly of a new Lockheed C-40 assigned to the General as his personal command plane, we took off at 11:16 A.M. of Monday April 27. Captain Joe Moore of old Mariveles Field was at the controls as the General's personal pilot. Copiloting was Lieutenant Ibe Donaldson, also of the Philippines. I was acting as wireless operator, immediately back of the pilot's compartment. The General was seated behind me on a roll of equipment, and across from him were the manly, handsome, and virile features of Mel Jacoby, alight with the prospect of an action assignment. As the beautifully running little ship cleared the airdrome under the steady touch of Joe Moore, I felt a pressure on my forearm so intense that I winced. The General had reached around my operator's chair and was gripping me. His whole face was glowing. We were off at last—the first step "on the way back." There were unashamed tears in his black eyes.

Shortly after, the General routed Lieutenant Donaldson with the chuckling observation that the lieutenant looked worn and tired and surely needed a rest. Except for take-off or landing, he copiloted the natty C-40 on its long trek, first westward, then north up through the center of the huge island continent.

It was on this first leg, after I had checked radio beams and was casually observing the beautiful cloud mountains of alto-cumulus, that I saw it: an almost perfect facsimile in contrasted lights and shadows on the turreted flank of one towering thunderhead of a five-pointed star against a faint surrounding halo. I blinked my eyes and stared again. It was there—serene and magnificent. It had no supernatural explanation, nor did I seek one. Just one of those curious accidental combinations of condensed moisture in God's sun-illuminated heavens. But within me there was a strange, inex-

plicable stirring, dramatic as it was powerful. I turned to call Mel's attention to it—provided he could see my optical illusion in that tumbled heap of cloud. But he was asleep. Forward, the General was piloting.

Three minutes later it was gone.

But I could not put it out of my mind. I refused to accept any suggestion that it portended anything—one could form almost any picture out of the confusion of cloud formations pearling in the brilliant sunlight.

Still . . .

All right, I conceded—if I must, I'd give it significance: The Air Force symbol, so long driven out of the skies by an overwhelming enemy, was back in glowing, towering promise.

I did not consider any possible evil portent. How could I know that with every revolution of the rhythmically beating propellers we were rushing forward to our exact, split-second rendezvous with death and that, in truth, the General's star had set?

Consistent with his character and attitude was his constant devotion on the up trip to surveys and inspections for the preservation of our life lines to the north and the constant improvement of conditions for the ultimate benefit of personnel and equipment—an activity that was not his responsibility nor his sphere.

Came a last "letdown" at noon of Wednesday April 29, at an advanced field where was located one of our Air Base outfits—commanded by Colonel Peter Skanse, my old chief at Selfridge Field. Following the inspection and outline of objectives, we repaired to the airfield. The General was limping slightly. He had been severely troubled since Bataan by an infection on his right calf from a thorn penetration on the Peninsula. The ministrations of the faithful Captain Nathan Serlin at the southern base had reduced the trouble, but now the dressing had slipped. Major W. P. Piehl, also of Selfridge Field, readjusted the dressing just as the General boarded the plane.

We had a new passenger. He was an Allied officer who had "thumbed" a ride to—ah, that was the question—to where?

Actually, he had asked to go to Darwin with us. The General

believed that he desired to be set down at an intermediate field south of our ultimate destination.

Mercifully blinded by the limitations of our human vision to the future of even a few seconds, we could not know that upon this seemingly unimportant point the fates of all of us were spinning down faster and faster upon a fine pivot that would shatter with the impact and fling the debris into an eternity of separation during mortal time.

The heavy sun was casting long shadows from the endless carpet of tiny objects far below us, when my popping ears told me of lessening altitude. I knew we were in the vicinity of the intermediate field, because I had checked the tuner to their transmitter. But why were we dropping? Was the General going down to have a low-altitude look-see? That must be it, I decided, because there was not too much daylight left for us to make destination and get established.

The steady roar of the engines broke and resumed on a lower pitch as Joe throttled back. We dropped steadily.

Below to starboard, I saw the first structures of the field upon which I had landed just over a month previously. The C-40 made a wide circuit and came into the wind. We dropped quickly with eased engines. I glanced sharply at the General in the copilot's position. He grinned and pointed one thumb down. Then we were going in. And a few moments later Joe had brought her down and taxied to a parking position at a safe distance from the runway strip. He skidded into a spot with the nose pointing across the runway, but at a slight angle toward the upwind. When the last spasmodic movement of the propellers dissolved into that intense, stiff silence that concludes every flight, I spoke:

"I didn't know you intended to land here, General, what with it being rather late. . . . After all, sir, you've got to give me warning when you set her down unexpectedly so I can be sick on my own time."

The General emerged from the pilot's compartment.

"Well, I passed an emergency cup back to you, didn't I?" he grinned, maliciously. (Indeed he had done so, as he would upon the

slightest indication of rough weather, just to put me "in the right frame of mind for getting it over with quicker.") He paused, puzzled at my apparent surprise. Then: "We came down to deliver our passenger. . . . Had you forgotten?"

First I, then the officer concerned, explained that in reality he had wished to go on. The General laughed.

"All right, fine. It's one on me. But as long as we're here, let's have a quick look around the station before we push on."

Quitting the boiling interior of the stationary C-40, our party split into small groups, Captain Moore and Lieutenant Donaldson remaining close to the plane. General George and I strolled farther, perhaps fifteen yards along the landing strip. Mel Jacoby followed for a short distance, then paused and lighted a cigarette. Our progress terminated at a point where a service-battered jeep came to a halt after making a run from the main portion of the camp, directly across the runway. It contained two officers of the American installation there.

From far down-wind came the muffled roar of P-40 engines being revved up.

Thus innocently enough, the stage was set. Nothing grand. Nothing dramatic. No crash of battle nor leap of searing flame. No stirring blare of bugles, nor shrill of frantic whistles . . .

The General made himself known to these officers of the squadron. They immediately came to a point that had been troubling him during the day—a report that five of our P-40 pilots had been reported missing after chasing Japanese raiders off over the Timor Sea the day before. Among them was Captain Allison W. Strauss, one of the outstanding members of the outfit.

"Looks like a couple of them are all right," explained Lieutenant Streeton. Then he shook his head. "But I'm afraid it's not so good for Al Strauss and the others."

We were back in it. I saw the old pain in the General's eyes that would come at those inevitable recitals of war's wastage.

"It'll leave us pretty short," continued the other. "What with them gone and the other chaps we're planning to ferry south to bring up some new 40's. . . . They tell me that's about the last of the 40's, and after that we'll get something better."

Immediately—and ironically—the General came to the defense of his almost-favorite fighter.

"That's a pretty good airplane when you know how to use it and where to use it," he said in his friendly, argumentative way.

"Yes, but not enough altitude. You got to—"

The lieutenant paused and glanced back. We all did. The atmosphere had suddenly become violent with the roaring throb of a forward-throttled P-40 at full take-off speed. Further conversation was impossible until the sleek, bullet-nosed fighter had streaked by in a whirlwind of its own dust.

We waited, squinting, and with our backs to the biting rush of flinty dust. Thus all of us were faced in the direction the speeding fighter had taken . . .

No one of us in that little group saw the sudden death bearing down upon us with the speed of a roaring streamliner.

The exhaust of the second P-40 was lost in the churning clamor of the first. Only those close to our parked transport saw and heard the second fighter as it drove with ever growing speed in the dusty wake of the first, but on the far side of the runway.

Only those close to our transport and the horrified observers in the control tower saw the second fighter suddenly waver in its forward direction. For a split second the pilot wrestled with the controls. But the rushing machine, now at well over one hundred miles an hour for the take-off, took its own head like some panic-driven thing. Technically, the fighter had become involved in a dreaded "left torque," and with the sureness and speed of an arrow, the uncontrolled fighter darted straight across the runway at an angle that brought it to bear on the nose of the General's airplane.

It was at this instant that I heard a muffled shout of wild alarm. Those around me sprang, some in one direction, some in another. Thus warned before I actually was aware of what was threatening, I, too, leaped to my left.

As I did, I turned—exactly as the wild P-40 sliced into the standing transport.

Instantly the whole forward portion of the transport exploded into a shower of rushing debris that cut into us and whistled and thudded like murderous shrapnel. The engine cowlings flew off;

individual cylinders, castings, bell cranks, rods, panels, instruments . . .

The 40, like a crazed stallion, reared into the air—then, in the fury of its own rushing wreckage, thundered down upon us.

My reaction was instantly automatic. I dove for the hard, gravel-strewn surface of the earth.

But as I went, my horror-filled eyes caught two individual flashes of the scene, and forever they were to be imprinted on my memory.

The first was the spinning air screw of the fighter spinning clean from its shaft and blurring into the form of Mel Jacoby as he lunged in one fruitless step to escape. It cut into him in a ripping, almost vertical diagonal.

Then my whole horizon seemed to be filled with the right wing and landing gear of the hurtling destroyer. Surely it would strike me even before I could fall beneath it . . .

I saw General George's form spin around—his right hand raised before his face as if in protective motion.

Then the plunging body of a man struck me fairly across the shoulders from the rear and I was flattened with great force.

As consciousness went out, the world filled with a hissing, screaming roar that drove great hammer blows into the earth with its passing . . .

The noisy darkness passed almost as soon at it had come.

Yet even the light was noisy. For a second more there was a confused dream. I was back in high-school days. My pals were calling for me to go to a dance. They'd parked their car in front of the house and were summoning me with a continuous blast of the horn that most surely would invoke the displeasure of my mother . . .

No, it was not a dream. There *was* a horn. . . . An automobile horn. And it was sounding in a continuous cry of wild alarm. . . . What . . . ?

I raised my head. But my horizon was filled with something black, yet dust-covered. Coursing downward from some place above were dark, shining streaks . . . Oil . . . Motor oil . . .

Then it all came back. . . . And I had escaped! But the General? I strove to rise. But vertigo made the world spin. And my arms hurt—both of them, at the elbows.

That God-awful horn! And someone was moaning, great bubbling moans. Close beside me.

Now I was up. The black object only eight inches before my face was some heavy engine part from the fighter, the transport, or the jeep, which now lay on its back just a few yards ahead of me, its steering column driven into the earth and its horn circuit jammed closed.

The moans . . . Yes, here. . . . Right beside me.

It was the young lieutenant who'd been driving the jeep. Blood pumped from a ragged compound fracture of the parietal. His right thigh was twisted around, and the bone projected through his ripped, blood-soaked slacks. Carefully I turned him over. He was suffocating in his own blood.

Twenty yards beyond lay the fighter. On her belly.

Figures ran in every direction. An ambulance screamed to a stop. There was shouting, cries . . .

The General?

They were just lifting his inert form into the ambulance. I ran heavily, and clambered in. He, too, was suffocating, his mouth charged with gravel.

But—thank God!—he was breathing! And strongly, too!

With that, I became fully calm. Whatever I had learned came to my assistance in clear, systematically ordered procedure.

Obviously he was suffering from severe, dangerous shock. But his pulse was strong and regular; his color, not too bad. With my inner self voicing thanks to Heaven that his life had not been snuffed outright, I made a closer examination as they lifted in the moaning form of the jeep driver. No, there was no obvious skull fracture, except one possibility of a right supraorbital.

The ambulance lurched into motion and shot off. Then paused as we came upon Mel Jacoby. But there was no use stopping there. One glance told that he was beyond the help of human hands.

I was having a difficult time with my patients. In profound

shock, the General endeavored to raise himself from the swaying stretcher. The other chap was wild, in his semiconscious condition, from pain and horror. Repeatedly he shouted out some slang expression, ridiculously mild, out of all proportion to the savageness of his mortal duress.

The little field hospital was overwhelmed.

Obviously the jeep driver was in the most immediate need. His hemorrhage was of extreme severity, and with each wild lurch he was causing further damage to his tortured body.

"I'll stand by and administer shock treatment to the General," I told the surgeon and his assistant. "I'm his aide."

The surgeon gave a quick, penetrating examination.

"No immediate danger," he said. "Thanks. . . . We've got our hands full here, and there're three others out there," he added, jerking his head toward the outer room, from whence issued sounds of hard breathing. Three others were painfully but not dangerously hurt. Two, including myself, had minor injuries. . . . Mel was dead.

About him, my first thought, rightly or wrongly, was not of the splendid young man cut down before even approaching his prime of life, or of the brilliant writing career which surely lay ahead for him, and from which mankind stood to benefit, but of his bride-wife who had kissed him goodbye just a few days before at the airport. I had taken motion pictures of them.

With the reduction of the compound leg fracture and control of the hemorrhage established, the immediate threat to the lieutenant's life was lessened, and full attention was given to General George.

There was no change in his strong steady pulse, no alteration of his breathing. Apparently he was not bleeding, externally or internally, unless there were hidden skull fractures. And that could be determined only at a hospital some twenty-two miles away, where modern equipment and expert medical assistance were available.

I left the little hospital—hardly more than an emergency dressing station really—now overburdened with its dismal sounds of pain, and going to the Australian signal center, dispatched an emergency message to General MacArthur in the south. Then accu-

mulated shock caught up with me, and the world spun about on a crazy pivot for a few minutes. Recovering, I asked one of the Australians to transport me to the wreck again, desiring to recover certain of our secret maps and documents.

At this dismal scene, littered far and wide with every type of wreckage, I could but marvel at the miracle of my deliverance—for the spot where I had lain prostrate in the second that the fighter rushed over at two-foot altitude, was the only two yards of churned earth not struck by some flying, death-dealing piece of debris. For the second time, I experienced extreme vertigo and tumbled forward.

But now Lieutenant Streeton and another whose voice rang a familiar note assisted me, demanding at the same time that I return to the dressing station for observation. The second voice belonged to Lieutenant Jack Dale of Nichols Field days. I learned that it was he who had piloted the first P-40. He'd seen the smash from the air and had come back in. He informed me that the pilot of the ill-fated fighter following him was not seriously hurt—only a severe concussion—but that his mental depression, because of his part in such a disaster, was causing some anxiety. As yet they had not told him the identity of the victims. I felt the strongest sympathy for him and was certain that the investigation would exonerate him from any charge of pilot's error (which it did). He, too, was a victim—an innocent victim of fateful circumstances.

Dark had descended upon the field. Under the blackout lamps of the dressing station, I found that the General had been prepared for removal to the Base Hospital. Again we entered the ambulance, and again the General's now equally unconscious companion was the moaning lieutenant. But this time, as we rumbled through the night, lighted here and there by bush fires still burning from the latest Japanese bombing attacks, I rode in the forward seat with the driver and an Australian doctor. A practiced attendant kept his eyes fixed on the patients.

Shadowy sentries, noting the lighted red cross above the cab, allowed us uninterrupted passage, and our progress was very good; but, rapidly as we traveled, still more rapidly came the dark shadow, with the silent beating of wings.

The attendant's voice spoke quickly through the window back of us. The doctor signaled for a stop. My own heart thudded in tightening apprehension. Somehow, it had not occurred to me as even remotely possible that the General might not live. True, he had suffered a terrific blow, and his unconsciousness was profound. Yet now, suddenly, I dreaded the return of the doctor. When he came back, his voice was low and tense as he instructed the driver:

"Get on—make your best time."

I felt the vertigo again, but refused to accede to it.

"Which one?" I said coldly, conscious of the utter unfairness of hoping that it would not be General George.

"Both," said the doctor shortly.

"But . . ."

"Well, we knew the lieutenant was in bad shape but— We'd better be getting on at our best speed. . . . They're both sinking rapidly."

His words struck a cold chill through me and seemed to stop my very breathing. Impossible! Incredible . . . This could not be. . . .

But it could be, and it was. The bitter truth of it was inescapable when finally we drew up before one of a series of elephant iron buildings, long and low, like a small barracks, showing in pale outline amid low trees in the moonlight. A small knot of figures resolved itself upon our approach, and there showed within the wide front door a very dimly lighted ward.

"Here, first, with the General," said a low, authoritative voice, "until we determine the situation. Take the lieutenant to the next ward, and give him an immediate transfusion."

The strength seemed to drain out of me as I saw the General's drawn features under the jaundiced rays of the oil lantern at the head of the waiting bed just in front of the door. A screen had been placed around. Gigantic, grotesque shadows showed startlingly against the screen and the remote regions of the room—in which I could hear men breathing and muttering, and sometimes moaning.

There were quick examinations by the chief and assistant sur-

geons present, including one youthful, intense lieutenant wearing the United States insignia and the caduceus of the Medical Corps. He was Lieutenant Lawrence Braslow. From that moment, his devotions were continuous.

In a short time we knew the worst. Besides the multiple fracture of the right forearm—no doubt sustained when the General threw it over his face for protection—he plainly was suffering from compound fractures of the skull. All signs and symptoms pointed to it. Reaching to the General's now bared feet, the senior surgeon flicked his fingers along the plantar surfaces. I swallowed, as clearly I saw the Babinski reflex illustrated. Instead of curling, in the natural way at such stimulation, the toes splayed rigidly for a moment, then relaxed—a certain indication, in combination with the other signs and symptoms present, of severe irritation or injury to the meningeal surfaces of the brain.

Subsequent examination was to give grim verification. There was the supraorbital fracture, a possible fracture of the parietal, and a series of fractures through the base. These alone were quite sufficient to ensure his never rallying from the new depths to which he was rapidly sinking.

Making my way blindly by moonlight through typical North Australia scrub growth to the Signal Office, I sent a second message indicating that the General's injuries were very severe, that he could not be moved and—upon the advice of Lieutenant Braslow—suggested that a neurosurgeon be sent north by air. This was to take advantage of the one-in-a-thousand chance of surgical intercession at the critical pass-over stage, so well known in head-injury accident wards, when, rousing from the relatively safe anesthesia of shock, the injured brain endeavors to take over. If relief of pressure can be effected then, there is a possibility that brain functions may be resumed with a fair degree of normalcy; and the prognosis is accordingly more promising. But even as we dispatched this radiogram we knew the fight was hopeless.

"Through odds and ends collected from airplane crashes, I have built a number of little portable oxygen respirators," said Lieutenant Braslow. "The General will respond, I am sure. But I am convinced that he should not be operated at this time and will

resist any suggestion. He could not possibly withstand the added shock. If we wait until the transition, however, and keep him alive with oxygen—well . . .”

The oxygen apparatus was placed in operation. The General took great deep inspirations of the life-giving gas and almost immediately showed favorable reaction. In spite of my grim fears, I could not but rally myself. I walked out into the moonlight and, wandering away from the hospital, fervently prayed that we who so urgently needed the vision, advice, and guidance of this man might be granted an extension of his life beyond this sudden terrible threat. For a long time I sat alone.

Returning, I passed the adjacent ward. They were just pulling a sheet over a white-faced figure gone very quiet. It was the lieutenant. I paused to assist them to complete his record. Then, grimly, I sent another radiogram south.

“You know we are glad to do anything you ask us to,” said the Australian operator under his shaded lamp; “but I hope you won’t have to come back here again tonight with another message, for I am afraid . . .”

In the little elephant-iron ward, I knew well enough that I should have to make another trip to that Signal Office. The General’s breathing had become convulsive; he was inspiring the oxygen in great gulps. All color had drained from his features. Someone was leading me away. It was the chief surgeon.

“You’ve had quite enough for one day,” he said in kindly tones, “and besides, if I were doing the right thing I would insist that you be entered as a patient yourself. I will not, if you consent to go to bed. You may be close by,” he said as he sensed my resistance, “—just next door. The sister will tell you.”

I agreed. I could be of no further assistance. But I did send one more message, to the field where the accident had occurred. A big transport plane was expected—the one which was to ferry the pilots south—and I had arranged for Mel’s body to be taken south with it. I requested that it be held until dawn, “—because I think we may have another passenger.”

I went to bed but, in spite of a powerful sedative, could not approach anywhere near sleep. Presently, forms darkened the

moonlighted doorway with a stretcher which they placed on the unoccupied bunk a short distance from me.

"Another patient," whispered one.

I knew better. "I am sorry," I said, "can't you please take him some place else."

"Certainly. . . . We were going to bury him at dawn," said the voice, referring to the body of the lieutenant.

The sedative was filling my head with queer buzzing noises. But another sound intruded with sinister violence. Even this far away, I could hear the terrible battle the General was putting up for his life. Tenaciously, bitterly he fought—giving ground inch by inch, as any good soldier must do against overwhelming odds. And the odds were overwhelming. I got up and stared through the pale moonlight at the little building beyond. A small white form moved to and fro against the dark outline of the doorway. I focused intently. It was a white cockatoo mounting solemn guard before the General's bed.

I went back to my bunk. . . .

The world seemed confused. Someone was speaking to me from the doorway. And then a pressure on my arm. The soft voice of one of the sister-nurses spoke.

"Would you like to come now to—see the General?" she said quietly.

"Oh, God!" I muttered.

"His pulse is still strong, but his respiration is failing," she said.

The yellow lantern had been replaced by a hissing pressure lamp, and in its rays I knew that peace had come to my General.

His features were relaxed. There was an appearance of almost contentment there.

Even as I stood, the surgeon straightened up, lifting the dangling tubes of his stethoscope as he did.

"You may discontinue the oxygen now," he said in a low weary voice.

I looked at my watch. It was 1:40 in the morning of Thursday April 30.

My general had fought his last battle.

Outside the door, there was a soft flutter of white in the moon-

light. I turned and stared. The white cockatoo had mounted some darker object there and stood upon it, silently, unmoving. It was the General's musette bag.

\* \* \*

Back through the warm smoke-hazed night the ambulance made its way. The giant transport was waiting—only a short distance from the debris-scattered scene of our accident. The living sat with the dead, and, taking off the black runway just before dawn to avoid the possibility of an enemy air attack, the big machine roared into the first lap of the long course southward to our destination, where I had radioed we would arrive in the afternoon.

Winds and the necessity for refuelings made our time considerably slower than anticipated, and it was well after dark when the heavy transport let itself down upon the dark, waiting airdrome we had quitted in bright sunlight only a few days before. Ranks of troops that had been assembled as an honor guard had long since been redispached to their barracks.

But we formed our own honor guard with exactly the kind of men the General would have preferred—young pilots, their unpressed uniforms red with the dust of take-off fields and spotted with the honest oil and grease of aircraft engines. They filed out of the transport, quickly forming a double line. One was supported by his companions—two fragments flying through the air from the General's smashed plane had driven painfully into his foot, but he stood at attention with the others. Back of them stood General Royce, Colonel Roy Rice, and others I did not identify. In a car near by, a picture of fine, calm, undramatic strength, was Mrs. Jacoby. As the bodies were borne out of the aircraft, every man's hand flew to his cap in sustained salute.

\* \* \*

The General's remains eventually were flown across the Pacific and then to Washington, where they were to lie in Arlington Cemetery, in a shaded nook with a little stream close by. . . . "A good camp site must have good flowing water, you know . . ."

But before he went from Australia, American, Australian, Dutch, and all others alike paid their tribute to his memory. Simplicity was the keynote of the services read by Chief of Chaplains, Major J. E. Kinney, before a silent assembly headed by General and Mrs. MacArthur and all ranking officers of the combined land, sea, and air forces.

Later, as the casket slowly descended from our sight, the large American flag was withdrawn from it, carefully folded, and presented to me.

From the vaulted heights of the building, the pure, sustained tones of "Taps" vibrated in stirring strength.

The last clean note came to an end. In the complete silence that followed, from somewhere in the open fields beyond came the infinitely soft echo of another bugle sounded by an American Sioux Indian. Mingled with the liquid sweetness of the notes, the far distant throb of an aircraft engine beat ever so gently against the air.

A picture rose in my mind: the General was taking off, and as his sturdy ship rose steadily over the distant tree line, he turned his helmeted head upon us. I could see his smile. His arm waved upward—and far aloft on the turreted side of a great cumulus cloud I could see the perfect outline of a five-pointed star, surrounded by a faintly illuminated halo of mist.

The General's star had not set. No. . . . The General's star had *risen*—and would remain forever risen for all of us, as he flew straight into the heart of it.



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